

UDC 327

eISSN 1857-9760

JOURNAL *of* LIBERTY *and* INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS



Vol. 8 • No. 2 • 2022



DOI 10.47305/JLIA

www.e-jlia.com

This page intentionally left blank



JOURNAL *of* LIBERTY *and* INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

Volume 8 • Number 2 • 2022

DOI: <https://www.doi.org/10.47305/JLIA2127>

Cover Image: Turning Torso skyscraper in Malmö (Sweden)
Photography by Ivana Grupche © 2022



This page intentionally left blank

Journal of Liberty and International Affairs

Published by the Institute for Research and European Studies

For further information, please visit: www.e-jlia.com

ISSN: 1857-9760 | UDC: 327 | DOI: [10.47305/JLIA](https://doi.org/10.47305/JLIA)

First published in April 2015

Please send all articles, essays, reviews, and documents to:

Regular Mail:

Institute for Research and European Studies
Orde Copela 13, Bitola (7000)
Republic of North Macedonia

E-Mail:

contact@e-jlia.com

Journal of Liberty and International Affairs is a triannual, open-access, and internationally peer-reviewed journal distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited. All materials are published under an open-access license that gives authors permanent ownership of their work.



This is an open-access journal according to:



The publisher and the journal have registered deposit policy with:



Archiving:



Indexed in: Scopus, EBSCO, DOAJ, CEEOL, ERIHPLUS, HeinOnline, ANVUR, ProQuest, UGC-CARE List Group II, etc.

Any views expressed in this publication are the views of the authors and are not necessarily the views of the editors or publisher. Journal of Liberty and International Affairs is committed to freedom and liberty, pluralism, different views, and a public discussion.

About the Journal

Journal of Liberty and International Affairs is a triannual (3 regular issues per year), international, open-access, and peer-reviewed journal published by the Institute for Research and European Studies. The journal also encourages the publication of occasional Special Issues. It welcomes submissions from political sciences, international relations, international law, and related fields. The primary intention is to offer academic and public debate taking into account the following topics: Individual liberty; Libertarianism; Liberalism; Objectivism; Capitalism; Anarchism; Democracy; Political Anthropology; International relations and diplomacy; Public and private international law; Geopolitics; Nationalism; Multilateralism; Ideology; Politics and religion; Neo-Ottomanism; Yugosphere; Propaganda; Regional cooperation; European federalism; EU law and politics; European economic governance; EU foreign and security policy; Competitive federalism; Comparative constitutional law; Human rights and liberties; Gender studies; Emerging powers (BRICS; Russia; China; India etc.); Transatlantic relations and other related topics, that contribute to the understanding of liberty and international affairs from different angles. It is important to emphasize, that this journal devotes special attention to Europe / EU as a crucial factor in contemporary international affairs. Also, the journal editorial team encourages the submissions that treat Balkan issues, especially the attitude of the Balkan countries towards the European integration, and their place within the new international context.

Journal of Liberty and International Affairs is oriented towards a wide audience of interested fellow specialists, geared towards informing policy-makers and social workers and engaging students. It is opened to any researchers, regardless of their geographical origin, race, nationality, ideological affiliation, religion, or gender, as long as they have an adequate manuscript. Because the journal addresses a wide range of academics we encourage the presentation of research to be made at a level where it is understandable to a broad audience. The editorial team encourages both established and early career researchers and doctoral students to take part in this journal to stimulate a greater exchange of ideas and knowledge.

Journal of Liberty and International Affairs predominantly treats the topics of interest of political sciences, international relations, and international law, but also seeks to provide a quality interdisciplinary platform of debate for scholars and researchers on complementary disciplines, including social sciences and economics. The content of the journal is based on pure academic research, with a tendency to achieve the highest standards of research and publishing. The journal benefits from the contribution of its International Editorial Committee (IEC) composed of experienced, agile, and dedicated scholars and researchers. These scholars and researchers may be affiliated with a University or another academic institution; however, they participate in the IEC on a personal basis. Thus, their decisions are independent, unbiased by scientific or national prejudices, particular individuals, or conflicting interests. The IEC members are expected to: 1) review manuscripts at the request of journal editors; 2) provide second opinions on articles; 3) help identify suitable reviewers; 4) possibly oversee the review process for several articles in a particular stream-choosing reviewer; and 5) contributing to the final publication decision. Thus, the role of IEC members is to advise and support the journal editors, who have responsibility for the content of the journal.

Submitted manuscripts are subjects to initial editorial screening and anonymous peer-review at least by two reviewers. The journal editorial policy requires that each manuscript will be reviewed by individuals who are experienced and experts in the particular field of the submitted manuscript (e.g. political sciences, law, social sciences, or economics).

Journal of Liberty and International Affairs is identified by an International Standard Serial Number (ISSN) and each article carries a Digital Object Identifier (DOI) which is a persistent identifier or handle used to identify objects uniquely, standardized by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO). The publisher and the journal have registered a deposit policy with SHERPA/RoMEO. All the articles are freely available online upon publication. They are published under the liberal Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Unported License (CC-BY). Each article is archived in SSOAR with an assigned URN (Unique Resource Name), which is a persistent identifier (PID) that enables unequivocal and permanent access to the publication and its scientific citation. The author holds the copyright and retains publishing rights without restrictions. Articles that have been accepted, will be published on the website of the journal and may be distributed to other online repositories or the author's pages on Academia.edu. To provide visibility of the published work, the journal is indexed and abstracted in multiple academic repositories and search engines. The journal editors share announcements, news, and related articles about the topic of the journal on Facebook. <https://www.facebook.com/e.JLIA>

EDITORIAL BOARD

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Goran Ilik, PhD, University St. Kliment Ohridski - Bitola, North Macedonia

MANAGING EDITORS

Mladen Karadjoski, PhD, University St. Kliment Ohridski - Bitola, North Macedonia

Artur Adamczyk, PhD, Centre for Europe, University of Warsaw, Poland

Angelo Viglianisi Ferraro, PhD, MICH, Mediterranean University of Reggio Calabria, Italy

INTERNATIONAL EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

Tara Smith, PhD, University of Texas at Austin, USA

Zhiqun Zhu, PhD, Bucknell University, USA

Vladimir Ortakovski, PhD, University St. Kliment Ohridski - Bitola, North Macedonia

Helmut Kury, PhD, University of Freiburg, Germany

Hans-Juergen Zahorka, Assessor iuris, LIBERTAS - European Institute GmbH, Germany

Hai Hong Nguyen, PhD, Queensland University of Technology, Australia

Gordana Dobrijevic, PhD, Singidunum University in Belgrade, Serbia

Cristina-Maria Dogot, PhD, University of Oradea, Romania

Muhammed Ali, PhD, University of Sharjah, United Arab Emirates

Inan Ruma, PhD, Istanbul Bilgi University, Turkey

Marija Kostic, PhD, Singidunum University in Belgrade, Serbia

Isabel David, PhD, University of Lisbon, Portugal

Remenyi Peter, PhD, University of Pecs, Hungary

Slavejko Sasajkovski, PhD, Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje, North Macedonia

Przemyslaw Biskup, PhD, Polish Institute of International Affairs, Poland

Hitesh Gupta, PhD, SPEAK Foundation, India

Skip Worden, PhD, Independent Researcher, USA

Mehmet Sahin, PhD, Canakkale Onsekiz Mart University, Turkey

Emel Elif Tugdar, PhD, University of Kurdistan Hawler, Iraqi Kurdistan, Iraq

Zoran Lutovac, PhD, Institute of Social Sciences, Serbia

Christian Ruggiero, PhD, Department of Communication and Social Research in Sapienza University, Italy

Nicolas Nord, PhD, University of Strasbourg, France

Gloria Esteban de la Rosa, PhD, University of Jaen, Spain

Habib Kazzi, PhD, Lebanese University, Lebanon

Sergii Burlutskyi, PhD, Donbass State Machine-building University, Ukraine

Anmol Mukhia, PhD, Jilin University, PR China

Pramod Jaiswal, PhD, Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies, New Delhi, India

Polonca Kovac, PhD, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia

Russell Foster, PhD, European Studies at the University of Amsterdam, Netherlands

Irvin Faniko, PhD, Academy of Security, Albania

Fabio Ratto Trabucco, PhD, Venetian University, Italy

Laura Maria Stanila, PhD, West University of Timisoara, Romania

Eyal Lewin, PhD, Ariel University, Israel

Tayeb Boutbouqalt, PhD, University of Abdel Malek Essaadi, Morocco

Ferdinand T. Abocejo, PhD, Eastern Visayas State University Tacloban, Philippines

Gergana Dimova, PhD, University of Winchester, UK

Iveta Reinholde, PhD, University of Latvia, Latvia

Bashar H. Malkawi, PhD, James E. Rogers College of Law, University of Arizona, USA

Carla Piffer, PhD, University of Vale do Itajaí (UNIVALI), Brazil

Paiman Ahmad, PhD, Department of Law, University of Raparin, Kurdistan Region, Iraq

Ezio Benedetti, PhD, Department of Social and Political Studies, University of Trieste, Italy

Marie-Line Karam, PhD, Lebanese American University, Lebanon

Erind Merkuri, PhD, University of Tirana, Albania

Bashkim Rrahmani, PhD, AAB College – Prishtina, Kosovo

Ioan Horga, PhD, University of Oradea, Romania

Tatyana Dronzina, PhD, University St. Kliment Ohridski - Sofia, Bulgaria

Djana Lusha, PhD, Faculty of Political Science, University of Zagreb, Croatia

Jeton Shasivari, PhD, Faculty of Law, SEEU - Tetovo, North Macedonia

Sidney Bravo Melgar, PhD, Andean University of Cusco, Peru

Emilia Alaverdov, PhD, Georgian Technical University, Georgia

Tony Tai-Ting Liu, PhD, National Chung Hsing University, Taiwan

Felipe Calderón-Valencia, PhD, University of Medellin (UdeM), Colombia

Selçuk Çolakoğlu, PhD, Beijing Normal University-Hong Kong Baptist University United International College, China

Biswajit Mohapatra, PhD, North Eastern Hill University, Shillong, Meghalaya, India

Rommel C. Banlaoi, PhD, International Studies Department of Miriam College, Philippines

Yiwei Wang, PhD, School of International Studies, Renmin University, China

Ngeow Chow-Bing, PhD, Institute of China Studies, University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur

Sezai Ozcelik, PhD, Faculty of Administrative and Political Science, Cankiri Karatekin University, Turkey

Mudassir Fatah, PhD, Noida International University, Greater Noida, India

Murat Necip Arman, PhD, Department of International Relations, Aydin Adnan Menderes University, Turkey

Antonios Karaikos, PhD, Graduate School of Law / Faculty of Law, Kyoto University, Japan

Elena Tilovska-Kechedji, PhD, University St. Kliment Ohridski - Bitola, North Macedonia

Thiago Felipe S. Avanci, PhD, CEST/Escola Politecnica/Universidade de Sao Paulo, Brazil

Angelos Kaskanis, PhD, Tactics Institute for Security and Counter-Terrorism, London, UK

Sinisa Malesevic, PhD, Chair of Sociology at the University College, Dublin, Ireland

Sanja Pesek, PhD, Department of Justice, Law and Criminology, American University, Washington, USA

Danijela Vukovic-Calasan, PhD, Faculty of Political Science, University of Montenegro - Podgorica, Montenegro

Esat A. Durguti, PhD, Faculty of Economy, University "Isa Boletini" - Mitrovica, Kosovo

Rumena Filipova, PhD, Institute for Global Analytics, Bulgaria

Aleksandra Kolakovic, PhD, Institute for Political Studies - Belgrade, Serbia

Prabhpreet Singh, PhD, School of Law, Manipal University Jaipur, India

Giuseppe Di Genio, PhD, Department of Law, University of Salerno, Italy

Vijay Laxmi Sharma, PhD, School of Law, Manipal University Jaipur, India

Ledion Krisafi, PhD, Albanian Institute for International Studies (AIIS) - Tirana, Albania

Marieta Safta, PhD, Faculty of Law at Titu Maiorescu University - Bucharest, Romania

Samuel Akpan Bassey, PhD, University of Calabar, Nigeria

Marc Nebojsa Vukadinovic, PhD, Sciences Po, France

ASSOCIATE EDITORS

Oxana Karnaukhova, PhD, Southern Federal University, Russia

Judithanne Scourfield McLauchlan, PhD, the University of South Florida St. Petersburg, USA

Goran Bandov, PhD, University of Zagreb, Croatia

Deilton Ribeiro Brasil, PhD, University of Itaúna, Minas Gerais, Brazil

Dijana Stojanovic - Djordjevic, PhD, Independent Researcher, North Macedonia

Valeri Modebadze, PhD, Caucasus International University, Georgia

Masataka Nakauchi, PhD, Osaka University, Japan

Marko Babic, PhD, University of Warsaw, Poland

Elena Temelkovska - Anevska, PhD, University St. Kliment Ohridski - Bitola, North Macedonia

Angelina Stanojoska, PhD, University St. Kliment Ohridski - Bitola, North Macedonia

Aslam Khan, PhD, Yobe State University, Nigeria

Ice Iljevski, PhD, University St. Kliment Ohridski - Bitola, North Macedonia

Eloi Martins Senhoras, PhD, Federal University of Roraima (UFRR), Brazil

Driton Kuqi, PhD, University of Tetovo, North Macedonia

Natalia Cuglesan, PhD, Babes-Bolyai University Cluj-Napoca, Romania

Vesna Poposka, PhD, International Vision University, North Macedonia

Nikola Gjorshoski, PhD, Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje, North Macedonia

TECHNICAL EDITOR AND IT CONSULTANT

Aleksandar Kotevski, PhD

PR CONSULTANT

Aleksandar Georgiev, MA

LANGUAGE REDACTION

Bojan Gruevski, MA

This page intentionally left blank

Table of Contents

ARTICLES

Erëza A. Arifi

EVALUATING MACROECONOMIC FACTORS AND THEIR INFLUENCE ON ECONOMIC GROWTH: EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE FROM WESTERN BALKAN ECONOMIES, 21

Simon Sngryan

ASSESSING THE EFFECTS OF TRADE LIBERALIZATION WITH THIRD COUNTRIES: THE CASE OF THE EURASIAN ECONOMIC UNION, 35

Nghi Thanh Nguyen, Thu Hang Tran, Dinh Thao Tran

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PUBLIC SERVICE MOTIVATION, WORK ENJOYMENT, AND TASK PERFORMANCE: A PRELIMINARY STUDY OF HEALTHCARE WORKERS IN VIETNAM, 47

Faruk Ahmeti, Nazmi Zeqiri

SWITCHING FROM CASH TO CASHLESS PAYMENTS: CONSUMER BEHAVIOR EVIDENCE FROM KOSOVO, 61

Andon Kume

ANALYSIS OF THE INTEGRITY INDEX FOR PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS IN THE ALBANIAN DEVELOPING REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY, 75

Evi Aryati Arbay, Ari Santoso Widodo

THE POST-TRUTH PHENOMENON INFILTRATING THE US POLITICAL SYSTEM, MEDIA, AND POPULACE: THE CRITICAL THINKING ANALYSIS ABOUT DONALD TRUMP'S POLITICAL LEADERSHIP, 87

Bojana Naumovska, Milka Dimitrovska

MACEDONIAN ELECTION RULES: CITIZENS VIS-À-VIS POLITICAL PARTIES, 108

Joana Kosho, Elda Zotaj

THE INCLUSION AND EXCLUSION OF CITIZENS IN THE EUROINTEGRATION PROCESS OF ALBANIA, 119

Muhamet J. Spahiu, Betim J. Spahiu

THE FACTORS INFLUENCING GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT GROWTH IN THE POST-PANDEMIC PERIOD: THE CASE OF KOSOVO, 136

Mohammad Reyaz, Sabir Ahamed

SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS OF SOFT POWER DIPLOMACY: A QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS OF AFGHANS' PERCEPTIONS ABOUT INDIA, 150

Theophilus Oyime Adejumo, John A. Adams, Gabriel T. Abumbe

TERRORISM AND ABRAHAMIC RELIGIOUS TRADITION: A FOCUS ON BOKO HARAM ISLAMIC FUNDAMENTALISM IN THE NORTH-EASTERN NIGERIA, 177

Violet B. Eneyo, Jihad Talib, Frank Mbeh Attah, Erim Etim Offiong

IRAN'S NUCLEAR POLICY: NATURE, AMBITION, AND STRATEGY, 202

Jajati K. Pattnaik, Chandan K. Panda

CHINA'S GEO-ECONOMIC INTEREST IN AFRICA: A SHORT OVERVIEW, 223

Sooraj Kumar Maurya

ON JUST, JUSTICE AND DISTRIBUTIVE JUSTICE: A CRITICAL AND COMPARATIVE DISCOURSE, 240

Muhamed Ali

TURKEY'S SOFT POWER POLICY TOWARDS THE BALKANS: CHALLENGES AND PERSPECTIVES, 255

Amer Ababakr

THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF INTERNATIONAL ORDER: A SHORT OVERVIEW, 266

Rukhsar Ahmad

THE LEGAL ROLE OF GOVERNMENT IN PROTECTING CULTURAL HERITAGE AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES IN THE WAR-AFFECTED COUNTRIES: THE CASE OF IRAQ AND SYRIA, 281

Danilo Djikanovic

THE UNITED NATIONS AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: UNDP IN THE FIGHT AGAINST POVERTY IN MONTENEGRO, 293

Robert Dopchie

THE INCREASING INFLUENCE OF EMERGING POWERS IN THE WESTERN BALKANS: A BRIEF ANALYSIS, 307

Yao Xuedan

FRENCH IMMIGRATION POLICY DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC, 321

Stephen Adi Odey, Bassey Samuel

UKRAINIAN FOREIGN POLICY TOWARD RUSSIA BETWEEN 1991 AND 2004: THE START OF THE CONFLICT, 346

THEMATIC SECTION: RUSSIA'S WAR OF AGGRESSION AGAINST UKRAINE

Aram Terzyan

UKRAINE DURING WAR: MAIN IMPLICATIONS, 332

Stephen Adi Odey, Bassey Samuel

UKRAINIAN FOREIGN POLICY TOWARD RUSSIA BETWEEN 1991 AND 2004: THE START OF THE CONFLICT, 346

This page intentionally left blank

SHARING AND PROMOTING YOUR ARTICLE

Sharing research, accomplishments, and ambitions with a wider audience makes you more visible in your field. This helps you get cited more, enabling you to cultivate a stronger reputation, promote your research, and move forward in your career. Sharing your article is an important part of the research.

General Conditions

- ★ Author's pre-prints on author server or institutional server only;
- ★ Author's post-prints on author's website, departmental website, employer's website, or institutional repository;
- ★ Authors retain copyright;
- ★ Published source must be acknowledged;
- ★ Publisher's version/PDF cannot be used;
- ★ Creative Commons Attribution License 3.0 Unported.

As an author, you benefit from sharing the appropriate version of your article which ensures that:

- ★ Your article makes it more visible, potentially increasing downloads and citations;
- ★ You always receive credit – you need to be cited accurately;
- ★ The integrity of the Scientific Record is not compromised - you should always direct readers to the most up-to-date version of your article - a link to the published journal article.

Promote Your Article

- ★ Consider search engine optimization and keywords to help readers discover your article;
- ★ Think about promoting your article through social media;
- ★ Decide how you will share your article.

ARTICLE GUIDELINES

Article title: Times New Roman; 14 pt; bold; alignment centered; single-line spacing; All Caps (max. 100 characters with spaces).

Author details: Times New Roman; 12 pt; single-line spacing; alignment centered. Please write the author details in the following order:

John Galt
Ayn Rand University - New York, USA
ORCID iD: <https://orcid.org/0000>
E-mail: galt@rand.uni.edu

Abstract and keywords: Between 150 and 200 words (5-7 keywords); Times New Roman; 12 pt; single-line spacing; justify. Write your abstract using concise, but complete, sentences. Get to the point quickly and always use the past tense because you are reporting on a study that has been completed. There are four things you need to include: 1) your research problem and objectives, 2) your methods, 3) your key results or arguments, and 4) your conclusion.

Article text: Times New Roman; 12 pt; justify; 1.5 line spacing; margins: Top: 2,5 cm; Bottom: 2,5 cm; Left: 3 cm; Right: 3 cm. The scope of submitted text should not exceed more than 30.000 characters (with spaces) including references. The text should be written in the neuter gender, concisely with correct orthography. Latin phrases should be set in *italics*.

Quotations: If they are brief (3 lines or fewer), quotations should be run on with the text. Longer quotations should be indented, without quotation marks. All indented quotations should be typed single-spaced.

Citation style: The author should follow Chicago Style (author-date system) for referencing, for example: (Dahl 1989, 45); (Geddes 1999, 134-43); (Linz 1975). All references should be given in full at first mention. Subsequent citations can be abbreviated. Footnotes should be kept to a minimum.

Headings and subheadings: Times New Roman; 12 pt; bold.

Tables: Times New Roman; bold; size 10; align heading left; single line spacing. Tables must be created in Word, not Excel. The table heading is situated above the table.

Figures: Times New Roman; bold; size 10; alignment centered; single line spacing. The authors must submit original electronic copies of the figures applied in the article in TIFF, JPG, or PNG format. Figure heading is situated under the figure. Consider aligning tables and figures at the center.

Dates: Dates should be given in the form: 26 December 1981.

References: The reference list appears at the end of your article, and provides more detailed information about the sources you cited. Each entry in the reference list also begins with the author's last name and the publication date, so that your reader can easily find any source they encounter in the text. For four or more authors, list all of the authors in the reference list; in the text, list only the first author, followed by *et al.* It is alphabetized by the author's last name.

PUBLICATION ETHICS

Journal of Liberty and International Affairs is determined to publish original work of value to the academic community in the best possible form and to the highest possible standards. We expect similar standards from our reviewers and authors. Honesty, originality, and fair dealing on the part of authors, and fairness, objectivity, and confidentiality on the part of editors and reviewers are among the critical values that enable us to achieve our aim. The journal fully accepts and behaves in accordance with the [Core Practices](#) established by the *Committee on Publication Ethics* ([COPE](#)) and is available free of charge on its website. For all parties involved in the act of publishing (the author, the journal editors, the reviewers, and the publisher) it is necessary to agree upon standards of expected ethical behavior. The ethics statements for *the Journal of Liberty and International Affairs* are based on [COPE Best Practice Guidelines for Journal Editors](#).

EDITOR RESPONSIBILITIES:

Accountability

The editor of a peer-reviewed journal is responsible for deciding which articles submitted to the journal should be published, and, moreover, is accountable for everything published in the journal. In making these decisions, the editor may be guided by the policies of the journal's editorial board as well as by legal requirements regarding libel, copyright infringement, and plagiarism. The editor may confer with other editors or reviewers when making publication decisions. The editor should maintain the integrity of the academic record, preclude business needs from compromising intellectual and ethical standards, and always be willing to publish corrections, clarifications, retractions, and apologies when needed.

Fairness

The editor should evaluate manuscripts for intellectual content without regard to race, gender, sexual orientation, religious belief, ethnic origin, citizenship, or political philosophy of the author(s). The editor will not disclose any information about a manuscript under consideration to anyone other than the author(s), reviewers and potential reviewers, and in some instances the editorial board members, as appropriate.

Confidentiality

The editor and any editorial staff must not disclose any information about a submitted manuscript to anyone other than the corresponding author, reviewers, potential reviewers, other editorial advisers, and the publisher, as appropriate.

Disclosure, conflicts of interest, and other issues

The editor will be guided by COPE's Guidelines for Retracting Articles when considering retracting, issuing expressions of concern about, and issuing corrections pertaining to articles that have been published in *the Journal of Liberty and International Affairs*.

Unpublished materials disclosed in a submitted manuscript must not be used in an editor's own research without the express written consent of the author. Privileged information or ideas obtained through peer review must be kept confidential and not used for personal advantage.

The editor is committed to ensuring that advertising, reprint, or other commercial revenue has no impact or influence on editorial decisions. The editor should seek to ensure a fair and appropriate peer-review process. Editors should recuse themselves (i.e. should ask a co-editor, associate editor or other members of the editorial board instead to review and consider) from considering manuscripts in which they have conflicts of interest resulting from competitive, collaborative, or other relationships or connections with

any of the authors, companies, or (possibly) institutions connected to the articles. Editors should require all contributors to disclose relevant competing interests and publish corrections if competing interests are revealed after publication. If needed, other appropriate action should be taken, such as the publication of a retraction or expression of concern.

Involvement and cooperation in investigations

Editors should guard the integrity of the published record by issuing corrections and retractions when needed and pursuing suspected or alleged research and publication misconduct. Editors should pursue reviewer and editorial misconduct. An editor should take reasonably responsive measures when ethical complaints have been presented concerning a submitted manuscript or published article.

REVIEWER RESPONSIBILITIES:

Contribution to editorial decisions

Peer-review assists the editor in making editorial decisions and, through the editorial communication with the author, may also assist the author in improving the manuscript.

Promptness

Any invited referee who feels unqualified to review the research reported in a manuscript or knows that its timely review will be impossible should immediately notify the editor so that alternative reviewers can be contacted.

Confidentiality

Any manuscripts received for review must be treated as confidential documents. They must not be shown to or discussed with others except if authorized by the editor.

Standards of objectivity

Reviews should be conducted objectively. Personal criticism of the author is unacceptable. Referees should express their views clearly with appropriate supporting arguments.

Acknowledgment of sources

Reviewers should identify relevant published work that has not been cited by the authors. Any statement that an observation, derivation, or argument had been previously reported should be accompanied by the relevant citation. A reviewer should also call to the editor's attention any substantial similarity or overlap between the manuscript under consideration and any other published data of which they have personal knowledge.

Disclosure and conflict of interest

Privileged information or ideas obtained through peer review must be kept confidential and not used for personal advantage. Reviewers should not consider evaluating manuscripts in which they have conflicts of interest resulting from competitive, collaborative, or other relationships or connections with any of the authors, companies, or institutions connected to the submission.

AUTHOR RESPONSIBILITIES:

Reporting standards

Authors reporting results of original research should present an accurate account of the work performed as well as an objective discussion of its significance. Underlying data should be represented accurately in

the manuscript. An article should contain sufficient detail and references to permit others to replicate the work. Fraudulent or knowingly inaccurate statements constitute unethical behavior and are unacceptable.

Originality and Plagiarism

The authors should ensure that they have written entirely original works, and if the authors have used the work and/or words of others that this has been appropriately cited or quoted.

Multiple, redundant or concurrent publication

An author should not, in general, publish manuscripts describing essentially the same research in more than one journal or primary publication. Parallel submission of the same manuscript to more than one journal constitutes unethical publishing behavior and is unacceptable.

Acknowledgment of sources

Proper acknowledgment of the work of others must always be given. Authors should also cite publications that have been influential in determining the nature of the reported work.

Authorship of a manuscript

Authorship should be limited to those who have made a significant contribution to the conception, design, execution, or interpretation of the reported study. All those who have made significant contributions should be listed as co-authors. Where there are others who have participated in certain substantive aspects of the research project, they should be named in an Acknowledgement section. The corresponding author should ensure that all appropriate co-authors (according to the above definition) and no inappropriate co-authors are included in the author list of the manuscript and that all co-authors have seen and approved the final version of the article and have agreed to its submission for publication.

Hazards and human or animal subjects

If the work involves chemicals, procedures, or equipment that have any unusual hazards inherent in their use, the authors must clearly identify these in the manuscript.

Disclosure and conflicts of interest

All authors should disclose in their manuscript any financial or other substantive conflicts of interest that might be construed to influence the results or their interpretation in the manuscript. All sources of financial support for the project should be disclosed.

Fundamental errors in published works

When an author discovers a significant error or inaccuracy in his/her own published work, it is the author's obligation to promptly notify the journal's editor or publisher and cooperate with them to either retract the article or to publish an appropriate erratum.

PUBLISHER'S CONFIRMATION:

In cases of alleged or proven scientific misconduct, fraudulent publication, or plagiarism the publisher, in close collaboration with the editors, will take all appropriate measures to clarify the situation and to amend the article in question. This includes the prompt publication of an erratum or, in the most severe cases, the complete retraction of the affected work.

COMPLIANCE WITH ETHICAL STANDARDS:

To ensure objectivity and transparency in research and to ensure that accepted principles of ethical and professional conduct have been followed, authors should include informed consent if the research

involved human participants, and a statement on the welfare of animals if the research involving animals. Authors* should include the following statements (if applicable) in a separate section entitled "Compliance with Ethical Standards" before the References when submitting an article:

- ★ Research involving Human Participants and/or Animals Informed consent.
- ★ Informed consent.

The authors should specifically mention if a waiver was obtained for the study and the reason for the waiver. They should confirm that the study was conducted following the [Declaration of Helsinki](#) and its later amendments or comparable ethical standards.

Acknowledgments

Anyone who does not meet the authorship criteria, such as people who provided technical help, institutional/department heads who provided general support, or medical writers who assisted with the preparation of the article content, should be acknowledged. Even if the authors have no one to acknowledge, the journal expects authors to include this section in the article and write "Not applicable."

Funding

All sources of funding for the research work and their role (if at all) in the design of the study and collection, analysis, interpretation of data, and in writing the article should be declared. Provide the name(s) of the funding agency/agencies along with the grant number(s). If the study did not receive any funding, the journal expects authors to include this section in the article and write "Not applicable."

RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN PARTICIPANTS AND/OR ANIMALS:

Statement of human rights

When reporting studies that involve human participants, authors should include a statement that the studies have been approved by the appropriate institutional and/or national research ethics committee and have been performed in accordance with the ethical standards as laid down in the [Declaration of Helsinki](#) and its later amendments or comparable ethical standards. If doubt exists whether the research was conducted in accordance with the [Declaration of Helsinki](#) or comparable standards, the authors must explain the reasons for their approach, and demonstrate that the independent ethics committee or institutional review board explicitly approved the doubtful aspects of the study.

The following statements should be included in the text before the References section:

Ethical approval: "All procedures performed in studies involving human participants were in accordance with the ethical standards of the institutional and/or national research committee and with the Declaration of Helsinki and its later amendments or comparable ethical standards."

For retrospective studies, please add the following sentence: "For this type of study, formal consent is not required."

Statement on the welfare of animals

The welfare of animals used for research must be respected. When reporting experiments on animals, authors should indicate whether the international, national, and/or institutional guidelines for the care and use of animals have been followed and that the studies have been approved by a research ethics committee at the institution or practice at which the studies were conducted (where such a committee exists).

For studies with animals, the following statement should be included in the text before the References section:

Ethical approval: "All applicable international, national, and/or institutional guidelines for the care and use of animals were followed."

If applicable (where such a committee exists): "All procedures performed in studies involving animals were in accordance with the ethical standards of the institution or practice at which the studies were conducted."

If articles do not contain studies with human participants or animals by any of the authors, please select one of the following statements:

- ★ "This article does not contain any studies with human participants performed by any of the authors."
- ★ "This article does not contain any studies with animals performed by any of the authors."
- ★ "This article does not contain any studies with human participants or animals performed by any of the authors."

Informed consent

All individuals have individual rights that are not to be infringed. Individual participants in studies have, for example, the right to decide what happens to the (identifiable) personal data gathered, to what they have said during a study or an interview, as well as to any photograph that was taken.

Hence it is important that all participants gave their informed consent in writing prior to inclusion in the study. Identifying details (names, dates of birth, identity numbers, and other information) of the participants that were studied should not be published in written descriptions, photographs, and genetic profiles unless the information is essential for scientific purposes and the participant (or parent or guardian if the participant is incapable) gave written informed consent for publication.

Complete anonymity is difficult to achieve in some cases, and informed consent should be obtained if there is any doubt. If identifying characteristics are altered to protect anonymity, such as in genetic profiles, authors should provide assurance that alterations do not distort scientific meaning.

The following statement should be included in the text before the References section:

Informed consent: "Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study."

If identifying information about participants is available in the article, the following statement should be included: "Additional informed consent was obtained from all individual participants for whom identifying information is included in this article."

***The corresponding author should be prepared to collect documentation of compliance with ethical standards and send it if requested during peer-review or after publication. The author will be held responsible for false statements or failure to fulfill ethical standards.**

This page intentionally left blank

Copyright © 2022 The author/s
This work is licensed under a CC-BY 3.0 license
(*) Corresponding author
Peer review method: Double-blind
Received: 08.02.2022
Accepted: 21.03.2022
Published: 14.06.2022
Original scientific article
DOI: <https://www.doi.org/10.47305/JLIA2282021a>

How to cite:

Arifi, Erëza A. 2022. "EVALUATING MACROECONOMIC FACTORS AND THEIR INFLUENCE ON ECONOMIC GROWTH: EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE FROM WESTERN BALKAN ECONOMIES". Journal of Liberty and International Affairs 8 (2):21-34. <https://e-jlia.com/index.php/jlia/article/view/595>.



EVALUATING MACROECONOMIC FACTORS AND THEIR INFLUENCE ON ECONOMIC GROWTH: EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE FROM WESTERN BALKAN ECONOMIES

Erëza A. Arifi^{1*}

¹College for International Management - Prishtina, Kosovo  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5197-1606> ✉ ereza.arifi@kolegijiglobus.com

Abstract: *This research aimed to identify and evaluate the impact of some macroeconomic components on economic growth performance. The data applied in the analysis were secondary data, including six countries from 2005 to 2020. The econometric approach applied was the fixed effect regression approach to economic growth as a dependent variable. The study also applied several diagnostic tests and the Hausman test to select between fixed and random effects. The data provided after the analysis show that inflation and foreign direct investment have a significant positive impact, while public debt has a significant negative impact. Moreover, unemployment and population growth have shown statistically insignificant results. The study from the aspect of the original contribution provides arguments and applies two variables that are very little addressed in the context of economic growth. The study results provide critical information for policymakers, economists, and researchers and provide arguments for a sound and proactive debate on these variables.*

Keywords: Banks; Economic Growth; Panel Data; Public Debt; Inflation

INTRODUCTION

The core objective of the governing body of each country is to create an adequate economic concept and then implement appropriate economic measures acceptable to a given country at a given point in time. Since there is no unique economic concept in the world, there is no universal solution that can be applied to the circumstances of all economies at any time, which makes it even more challenging to find an adequate solution in a time of global economic crisis. Consequently, the focus of this research is to explore the macroeconomic components that influence economic growth. Numerous theoretical and empirical research has been conducted on economic growth. Whereas economic growth modeling theory contributes to examining economic growth, empirical models employ data to identify networks that influence economic growth. Growth philosophy by Solow and endogenous growth models are commonly used as general frameworks; however, many researchers have modified the original model based on growth sensitivity and its elements in their studies.

Economic growth is the dependent variable, whereas the independent variables are inflation, government debt, population growth, unemployment, and foreign investment.

The Western Balkans (WB) have outperformed other more developed transition economies in economic growth in the previous two decades. The history of wars in most countries included in the research is the cause of this stagnation, except in Montenegro and Albania, where the consequences of these events are apparent even now in terms of the European integration process. Another concerning point is that the European Union has offered continued financial and technical assistance to each country, even though these countries have not made adequate improvements. Thus, a review of economic growth drivers can shed light on the reasons limiting economic growth in WB countries. Therefore, to investigate these components, we attempt to answer the following research questions:

(RQ1): Which factors limited economic growth?

(RQ2): Which economic strategies may be used to reduce these limitations?

The research contributes to the expansion of the literature, as there is much interest in the determinants that affect economic growth, especially for these countries' fragile systems. The originality of this study lies in the fact that it has the latest data published by the World Bank and the application of an adequate dynamic approach to achieving sustainable results. Empirical findings are essential for young researchers and academics and significant for state-level policy-making structures.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Measuring macroeconomic parameters has always been and continues to be a challenging task for scholars and policymakers in both developed and undeveloped countries. Numerous researchers have performed research using various models to arrive at an argument about the relationships among these factors. It is essential to mention a serious disagreement between the studies conducted so far regarding their influence on global economic growth. However, a limited number of studies exist for eurozone economies, particularly for the Western Balkan economies. In addition, several conclusions address the macroeconomic indications that influence economic growth. The following section will comprehensively analyze each parameter used in the study, including theoretical and empirical assessments.

The study conducted by Hausmann *et al.* (2006) applied the decision tree method to classify binding restrictions for different states. The tree method as a diagnostic analysis is based on the execution of short-term restrictions, initially defining the conditions that characterize the economy. The economic activity of low-income countries should be limited by at least one of the following two factors: the high cost of finance or the low private return on investment. Many authors have tried to identify some of the main factors that affect economic growth, addressing a set of countries (panel analysis) and individual countries. For the countries apostrophized in the analysis, identifying these factors is a complex issue as these countries are making deep reforms in political and economic issues.

Numerous studies are conducted for WB countries to analyze the explanatory variables through different empirical approaches. In the special report on regional economic issues, the authors Murgasova *et al.* (2015) analyzed the driving factors for WB economies. The authors argued that capital accumulation and overall productivity factors were the most significant growth drivers in the new Member States and the WB countries.

Tsounta (2014) nevertheless found that higher factors of total productivity influenced growth in emerging market economies during the period 2000-2012. Other studies provided different explanations for the low contribution of labor and human capital to GDP growth in the Western Balkans. Gabrisch (2015) used the panel regression analysis when applying the growth diagnostic approach to identify the limitations to economic growth in the Western Balkan countries. These results show that the primary binding restrictions are non-performing loans in the private sector. In addition to these findings, the findings of the IMF report (Murgasova *et al.* 2015) argued that non-performing loans (NPLs) in the Western Balkans' debt collection procedure are slower due to internal factors including legal, jurisdictional, tax, and regulatory barriers.

Public debt (PD) is indeed one of the components that have been identified as an influencing factor in economic growth across numerous observed revisions. Demetrios *et al.* (2021) examined the countries of Asia in the panel employing a variety of econometric methodologies from 1980 to 2012. Moreover, they used the asymmetric panel ARDL method to observe the influence of PD; then, their results suggest that a rise in PD is directly inversely allied with economic growth. Furthermore, Fetai *et al.* (2020) discovered that a low level of PD has a positive consequence on economic growth. A greater level of PD harms economic progress by analyzing European states in the transition phase above the PD threshold using a series of econometric methods. The most recent study, performed by Law *et al.* (2021), examined emerging economies using nonlinear analysis and the PD threshold to offer empirical evidence on the value of the PD threshold also its influence on economic progress. Their outcomes demonstrated that PD, with a value of 51.65 percent, has a considerable negative influence on economic progress. At the same time, economies with lower PD levels have shown to be insignificant in economic growth. However, there is research whose conclusions contradict the above findings. Authors Marmullaku *et al.* (2021), addressing the association between PD and economic development for European countries in transition using a combination of static and dynamic approaches, suggest that PD via public investment has a considerable beneficial influence on economic development. Therefore, based on a review of the empirical literature, we may conclude that there is a latent consensus that public debt (PD) has no negative effect while it is low, but increases over 51.65 percent hinder economic growth. Several of the economies covered in this research exceed the proclaimed threshold, and descriptive statistics show that Albania and Montenegro had rates higher than 70 percent.

On the other side, inflation (INF) is a vital feature that affects economic expansion. Even researchers do not reach a consensus in this part but argue different effects. Thus, Carvahlo *et al.* (2017), in their revision theoretical and empirical investigation of economic growth and INF discovery that there is an inverse and low association between INF steadiness and economic expansion. In this revision, 65 countries were analyzed through the GLS estimator, including the period 2001 to 2011.

Arguments in the same constellation were reached by Hu *et al.* (2021), analyzing INF, endogenous quality growth, and economic expansion. Their quantifiable inspection discoveries that the association across INF and growth usually is bumpy, but the effect on INF well-being is negative. Using the structural approach VAR, Djurovic and Bojaj (2021) have investigated the effects ranging from the onset of the financial crisis, the reflection of economic governance on INF, and the dynamics of economic expansion for each of the Western Balkan (WB) countries including January 2006 by December 2018. The study's findings conclude that WB policymakers understand the impact of institutional power on sustainable development at the national level.

On the other hand, we have steered research that contradicts the abovementioned findings. Kryeziu and Durguti (2019), applying the multivariable regression analysis, have observed the Eurozone countries, including the 2001-2017 period, and settled that there is a confident association between INF and economic development. To reinforce the view that there is a positive association across them for WB countries, Durguti (2020) has studied this relationship using the vector error correction model [VECM], including the period 2001 to 2017. Furthermore, Durguti *et al.* (2021), in an analysis of a panel for WB countries using the dynamic fixed effect approach and GMM Arellano-Bover/Blundell-Bond, concluded that there is a confident association between INF and economic development.

Additional variables included in the study were unemployment (UER) and population growth rate (POP), both of which have been the subject of extensive scientific study. In the vast majority of them, it has been concluded that there is no stable relationship. Evaluating Okun's Law by Conteh (2021) analyzed the impact of UER on economic growth in the instance of Liberia. Using the Granger Causality test and ARLD method, there is a neglected link equally in the short and long run. Whereas, while examining the WB countries, Ziberi and Alili (2021), using fixed-effect, have argued that there is a negative association, but it is not significant between these factors. Finally, foreign direct investment (FDI), which has a considerable effect on economic progress, has attracted the curiosity of academics.

As a consequence, several authors have contributed to this topic. Through various statistical techniques spanning the years 2004 to 2018, the authors Shkodra *et al.* (2021) discovered an important confident link between FDI and economic development for the economies of the Western Balkans. On the other side, the authors Estrin and Uvalic (2016) discovered that FDI influenced economic development in their study of WB countries in contrast to Central East European countries.

ECONOMETRIC ANALYSIS

Data and Sample

The sample included in the study consists of 6 WB countries (Kosovo, Albania, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Serbia), covering the period 2005 to 2020 with a total of 96 observations. Panel data were used in this study, and these data were provided by official statistics published by the World Bank (WB) for each country in particular and then processed to fit the research. The data provided is considered credible, based on the argument that most studies have as a reference point the World Bank database, respectively

World Bank Indicators. Based on previous studies conducted by different authors, different techniques have been used to reach the most accurate conclusions.

Therefore, our research involves a good combination of issues, including important macroeconomic determining factors on the one hand and data availability on the other. Numerous authors have applied different models to test the impact of macroeconomic causes to evaluate their impact on economic growth. The most suitable models for this study are dynamic approaches starting from the fixed-effect model, GMM estimator, and 2SLS, as this method calculates data endogeneity and robustness of instruments to assess interdependence between macroeconomic factors and economic growth. Therefore, based on the arguments presented above, the primary purpose of the research is to examine macroeconomic factors and the degree of their influence on economic growth for WB countries for the period tested. Research conducted in this dimension argues that macroeconomic determinants are investigated to identify which parameters should be oriented toward policy-making groups in the future. Based on this premise, an empirical method for variable selection and model application was developed based on Ziberi and Alili's (2021) research and Durguti *et al.* (2020).

Variables and Statistical Explanations

The study has defined economic growth as a dependent variable and some of the most important macroeconomic factors as independent variables based on recent studies on macroeconomic determinants and their impact on economic growth. After completing several diagnostic tests and based on their results, fixed effect regression was used to reach this objective. Fixed effect regression proved to be the most appropriate model for the data used in the research. Many studies (Ziberi and Alili 2021; Durguti *et al.* 2020; Fetai, Mustafi, and Fetai 2017; Durguti *et al.* 2021) have applied such approaches with a focus on fixed-effects regression but applying other dynamic models as well. Therefore, the study was conducted mainly in this research, but with some changes in selecting some other variables. Table 1 presents the description of the variables in abbreviations, the general explanation, and the data source.

Table 1: Variable Definitions and Data Source (Source: Authors' compilation)

Variable Name	Variable Label	Data Source
<i>Dependent Variable</i>		
GDP_{growth}	Gross Domestic Product Growth (%)	World Bank Indicators
<i>Independent variables</i>		
PD	Public Debt-to-GDP	World Bank Indicators
INF	Inflation Rate	World Bank Indicators
UER	Unemployment Rate	World Bank Indicators
POP	Population Growth Rate	World Bank Indicators
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment	World Bank Indicators

Table 2 presents the descriptive data for each of the parameters, the influence of which on economic growth is being explored with the dependent one. This evidence contains the sample sizes, mean, deviation, and minimal and maximal values.

Table 2: Descriptive Analysis (Source: Authors' calculation)

Variables	Obs.	Mean	S. D	Min	Max
Albania					
GDP_g	16	3.1527	2.6324	-3.9553	7.5000
PD	16	64.6612	7.5090	53.5000	74.1800
INF	16	2.2575	0.7161	1.3000	3.6000
UER	16	14.4906	1.9841	11.4700	18.0600
POP	16	-0.4033	0.2292	-0.7673	-0.0919
FDI	16	7.8785	2.0684	3.2597	11.1706
Bosnia and Herzegovina					
GDP_g	16	2.4689	3.1677	-3.1969	8.8000
PD	16	35.8000	8.3544	18.7000	45.8000
INF	16	1.4382	2.6257	-1.6000	7.4000
UER	16	25.0281	4.7844	15.6900	31.1100
POP	16	-0.8590	0.6079	-1.7453	0.0302
FDI	16	3.5038	2.6651	0.7863	11.6737
Kosovo					
GDP_g	16	3.5974	2.7678	-5.3402	7.2000
PD	16	12.2075	4.3475	5.2000	17.5000
INF	16	1.9736	3.0629	-2.4000	9.4000
UER	16	27.0000	3.0460	22.4000	33.4500
POP	16	0.2541	0.7246	-1.3649	0.8952
FDI	16	6.7864	3.2636	2.8254	12.0300
Montenegro					
GDP_g	16	2.1558	5.8154	-15.3068	8.6000
PD	16	55.5143	16.0057	31.7000	79.3000
INF	16	2.1003	2.3645	-0.7000	9.0000
UER	16	19.0462	3.8013	15.1200	30.3100
POP	16	0.0805	0.0893	-0.1161	0.2145
FDI	16	16.2607	8.9172	5.1828	37.2724
North Macedonia					
GDP_g	16	2.6369	2.7571	-5.2084	6.4000
PD	16	33.3393	7.3246	20.6000	43.2300
INF	16	1.6672	2.2075	-0.7000	8.3000
UER	16	28.3856	6.3134	17.2600	37.2500
POP	16	0.1217	0.0988	-0.2006	0.2118
FDI	16	4.1935	1.9040	0.5358	8.7982

Serbia					
GDP_g	16	2.6369	2.7571	-5.2084	6.4000
PD	16	33.3393	7.3246	20.6000	43.2300
INF	16	1.6672	2.2075	-0.7000	8.3000
UER	16	28.3856	6.3134	17.2600	37.2500
POP	16	0.1217	0.0988	-0.2006	0.2118
FDI	16	4.1935	1.9040	0.5358	8.7982

According to the statistics reported for WB economies, Bosnia and Herzegovina had the highest economic growth over the studied period at 8.8 percent, while Montenegro had the lowest economic value at 15.3 percent. Albania leads with 64.7 percent of GDP in public government debt, while Kosovo has the lowest value at 12.2 percent of GDP. The mean inflation rate in all WB economies ranges from 1.4 percent to 2.3 percent. Kosovo had the highest inflation rate of 9.4 percent, and Montenegro with a rate of 9.0 percent.

The mean employment value for WB economies throughout the observation time is as follows: (Kosovo 27.0; Albania 14.4; Bosnia and Herzegovina 25.0; North Macedonia 28.4; Montenegro 19.0; and Serbia 28.4). The study conclusively demonstrates that the economies covered in the studies have serious unemployment challenges. Although North Macedonia and Serbia had the highest mean value unemployment rate during the observed period (37.3 percent), it was followed by Kosovo (33.5 percent), Bosnia and Herzegovina (31.1 percent), Montenegro (30.3%), and Albania (18.0%). The mean annual population growth rate varies between countries, with Albania having a negative rate of -0.4 percent and Bosnia and Herzegovina having a negative rate of -0.8 percent, while other countries have positive growth with a substantial variation in Kosovo of 0.3 percent. Montenegro has the highest mean value of foreign direct investment at 16.3 percent of GDP, with minor variances in other economies. Other statistics are reported in further detail in Table 2.

Table 3: Correlation Analysis (Source: Authors' calculation)

	GDP_g	PD	INF	UER	POP	FDI
GDP_g	1.0000					
PD	-0.2533	1.0000				
INF	0.2445	-0.1018	1.0000			
UER	0.1311	-0.2831	-0.0762	1.0000		
POP	0.1867	-0.3325	0.0994	0.1867	1.0000	
FDI	0.1283	0.0847	0.2305	-0.1947	0.3297	1.0000

Furthermore, the outcomes from the correlation analysis exposed in Table 2 show that the factors correlate with them. It is noted that the problem with multicollinearity does not exist as only some of the factors have a moderate association among themselves. The GDP_{growth} has positive associations with inflation, unemployment, population growth, and foreign investment, while adverse associations exist between public debt and GDP_{growth}. At the same time, other correlations are presented in detail in Table 3.

Model Specification

The empirical method used to choose the correct evaluation approach is discussed in this section. Several prior empirical studies have attempted to identify the drivers of economic growth. Nevertheless, as emphasized in this research, growth theories are diverse, and as a result, several different perspectives have been proposed. Due to the diversity of viewpoints, identifying the most effective policies to drive growth is challenging and complex (Moral-Benito 2009). We matched the Fixed Effects (FE) and Random Effects (RE) models for panel data using the standard approach. However, the preferred model is FE, which is more suitable for small samples and can be evaluated for balanced panels, as is the case in this research. To decide between these two models, Hausman's chi-square statistics were used. A considerable value from this test will support FE over RE.

Table 4: Comparison of FE and RE (Source: Authors' calculation)

Tests	T-statistic (TS)	Probability [p]	<>	CV [5%]	Decision
F test that all $u_i = 0$:	F (5.85) = 3.77	0.004	>	2.12	If TS>CV → Reject H_0 (Supports Fixed Effects)
$H_0: \sigma_u^2 = 0$	Chi2(5) = 13.75	0.023	>	15.57	If TS<CV → Reject H_0 (Reject Random Effects)

We test the null hypothesis that individual-specific random unobserved effects and regressors are uncorrelated. According to this test, the difference between the evaluators is small in its variance according to FE, so there is no systematic variance among the evaluators, which suggests that the FE evaluator is biased and consistent. Whereas the value of the chi-square test for RE, the value of T-statistics is less than the value of the constant of variance and, as such, suggests we exclude H_0 (see Table 4). Furthermore, based on these findings, our analysis will be based on the selection of the FE model.

The following growth model is specified in the literature discussed in the second section and the availability of data for the countries included in the sample.

$$Y_{it} = \alpha_0 + \beta_1 X_{it} + \varepsilon_{it} \dots \dots \dots (1)$$

Where:

i ;- indexes countries, t ;- the period; y_{it} ;- represents the dependent variable GDP growth (annual %), x_{it} ;- represent a set of growth determining factors, including those suggested by previous empirical studies therefore PD, INF, UER, POP, FDI, and ε_{it} ;- is the error term.

Therefore, in the following, we will present the general equation of FE.

$$GDP_g_{it} = \alpha + \beta_1(PD_{it}) + \beta_2(INF_{it}) + \beta_3(UER_{it}) + \beta_4(POP_{it}) + \beta_5(FDI_{it}) + \varepsilon_{it} \dots \dots \dots (2)$$

Econometric Findings

A fixed-effect model was employed to investigate the connection between independent and dependent factors. The Hausman test was used to examine the hypothesized model. Table 5 displays the results obtained: The R^2 coefficient of determination is 0.323, which signifies that the fixed-effect model describes 32.3 percent of the variability in economic growth. In contrast, other factors describe the remaining variability. The statistical value of the F-test is 5.85 ($p\text{-value}=0.004$), indicating that the hypothesis of a significant linear connection relating dependent and independent variables is accepted at a significance level of 5 percent. Durbin-Watson test results of 1,691 indicate that there is no autocorrelation. Lastly, the heteroskedasticity test was used, and the result shows that the data do not concern heteroscedasticity since the value of χ^2 is ($p=0.056$), suggesting that it is more than $\alpha=0.05$.

Table 5: Parameter Estimates (Source: Authors' calculation)

	Fixed effect (1)	Random effect (2)
_cons	5.4736*	3.5005**
PD	-0.0998**	-0.0374**
INF	0.1262***	0.2141**
UER	0.0655	0.0003
POP	0.9995	0.4267
FDI	0.0105**	0.0456**
<i>Diagnostic Tests</i>		
R²	32.26	15.57
F-test	F(5.85) [$p=0.004$]	"_"
Wald chi2	"_"	Chi2(13.75) [$p=0.023$]
χ^2heteroscedasticity		0.056
Durbin-Watson		1.691
VIF (Mean value)		1.56
Observation	96	96
Groups	6	6

Note: *** $p<0.01$, ** $p<0.05$, * $p<0.1$.

Based on the outcomes observed in Table 5, respectively (β constant then $p\text{-value}$) of the indicator public debt has a negative association ($\beta=-0.0998^{**}$) with GDP growth for WB states. The outcomes obtained are reliable to the authors Dimitrios *et al.* (2021), who argue that an increasing change in public debt for Asian states harms GDP in the short and long term. Bexheti *et al.* (2020) have reached the same conclusion by analyzing the association between public debt and GDP growth for the WB. The outcomes of this revision suggest a weak negative association between these two parameters. Analyzing the Eurozone economies, Pegkas *et al.* (2020) have argued that there is a negative link between public debt and economic development in the long run. However, the research results are inconsistent with the revision steered by Fetai *et al.* (2020),

where the correlation between these two variables has been addressed through OLS, fixed-effect, and GMM, which have argued that there is a positive link including public debt and GDP.

As mentioned above in the descriptive statistics, WB economies have common characteristics, where the inflation rate in most of them was in an almost identical range, with some minor exceptions. Therefore, based on the results provided by the econometric analysis, it is noticed that ($\beta=0.1262^{***}$) has a significant favorable influence on the level of reliability of 1 percent. From this, we can conclude that any change in the inflation rate will affect economic growth for WB countries. Different researchers concerning these two indicators have conducted many studies. However, the consistency of the results will be mainly related to studies related to Eurozone countries and WB countries, whether as a panel analysis or individual research. The study results are consistent with the study conducted by Kryeziu and Durguti (2019). They analyzed Eurozone countries applying multi-linear regression analysis and argued that there is a significant positive relationship between inflation and economic growth. Moreover, the identical results investigating the WB economies have been argued by Durguti *et al.* (2021) that there is a positive association between these two variables. Whereas, the contradictory results of this study turn out to be with the author Nene *et al.* (2022), where they have argued that in the countries of some African economies, they have a positive impact, while in the countries of Europe, they have a significant negative impact.

The study marks for UER and POP did not distinguish from predictions, as ($\beta=0.0655$ for UER, and $\beta=0.9995$) were shown to have an unimportant effect on economic expansion. These results are comparable with Ziberi and Alili's (2021) research, which used the fixed-effect model to assess if there is a link relating to UER, POP, and economic growth in Western Balkan (WB) economies. According to the findings of this analysis, there is no significant relationship between them. Foreign direct investment has been treated by many researchers and is considered a significant contributor to economic growth. Econometric results show that FDI significantly impacts the 1 percent confidence level. This means that any increase in FDI means economic growth and vice versa. The results of this study are in line with the authors Bahizi *et al.* (2020) and Ziberi and Alili (2021), advocating that there is a positive correlation between FDI and economic growth.

CONCLUSION

As a material basis on which the interest of various groups, starting with scholars, is being disseminated, policy-making structures have been the subject of studies in economic theories for decades. The special attention of researchers is drawn to the factors that influence GDP growth, especially the macroeconomic factors that are considered vital for economic growth. This research focuses on determining the macroeconomic policy factors in the Western Balkan countries (Kosovo, Albania, North Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, and Serbia) by applying the dynamic approach through a fixed-effect model. From a choice of five determinants (public debt, inflation, unemployment rate, population growth, and foreign direct investment) whose impact on economic growth was examined in the paper, we concluded that only two could not explain their impact on the dependent variable.

The study also has some limitations in the representation of the observed period, as in total, we have 16 observations for each country in particular, and there are 96 observations in total. Therefore, it is recommended to expand the spatial and temporal observation of variables to reduce errors and increase the accuracy of the findings. Nevertheless, these results will not differ from an actual situation, which can be seen as an orientation compass for investigating the factors that affect economic development.

The results imply several policy implications, including reducing public debt and unemployment rates and creating favorable conditions for increasing FDI. WB economies need an expansion and proactive approach to facilitating and eliminating bureaucratic procedures in creating an environment that will strengthen the links between trade and economic growth and consequently reduce unemployment.

COMPLIANCE WITH ETHICAL STANDARDS

Acknowledgments:

Not applicable.

Funding:

Not applicable.

Statement of human rights:

This article does not contain any studies with human participants performed by any authors.

Statement on the welfare of animals:

This article does not contain any studies with animals performed by any authors.

Informed consent:

Not applicable.

REFERENCES

1. Asteriou, D., Pilbeam, K. & Pratiwi, C.E. 2021. Public debt and economic growth: panel data evidence for Asian countries. *Journal of Economics and Finance* 45, 270–287. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12197-020-09515-7>
2. Bahizi, M., Safari, K., Butare, G. W., Rutikanga, C. & Bikorimana, G. 2021. Empirical Analysis of Foreign Direct Investment on Economic Growth: Evidence from the East African Community. *International Review of Economics and Management*, 9 (2), 114-135. <https://doi.org/10.18825/iremjournal.977022>
3. Besnik Fetai, Kestrim Avdimetaj, Abdylmenaf Bexheti, and Arben Malaj. 2020. Threshold effect of public debt on economic growth: An empirical analysis in the European transition countries. *Zbornik radova Ekonomskog fakulteta u Rijeci: časopis za ekonomsku teoriju i praksu*. 38, 2, 381–406. <https://doi.org/10.18045/zbfri.2020.2.381>
4. Bexheti A., Sadiku L., Sadiku M. 2020. The Impact of Public Debt on Economic Growth: Empirical Analyses for Western Balkan Countries. Economic and Financial Challenges for Balkan and Eastern European Countries. *Springer Proceedings in Business and Economics*. Springer, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-39927-6_2
5. Conteh, K. 2021. Economic Growth And Unemployment: An Empirical Assessment of Okun's Law In The Case of Liberia. *Preprints*, <https://doi.org/10.20944/preprints202105.0759.v1>
6. Djurovic, G., & Bojaj, M. M. 2020. Governance and Growth in the Western Balkans: A SVAR Approach. Linear and Non-Linear Financial Econometrics - *Theory and Practice*. Intech Open. <https://doi.org/10.5772/intechopen.91731>
7. Durguti, A. Esat. 2020. How Does the Budget Deficit Affect Inflation Rate – Evidence from Western Balkans Countries. *International Journal of Finance & Banking Studies*, 9(1), 01–10. <https://doi.org/10.20525/ijfbs.v9i1.526>
8. Durguti, A. Esat., Gashi, E., Kunoviku, F. D., & Mehmeti, M. 2020. DAF Determinants Affecting Economic Growth – Evidence for Western Balkans Countries. *International Journal of Finance & Banking Studies* (2147-4486), 9(1), 36–46. <https://doi.org/10.20525/ijfbs.v9i1.652>
9. Durguti, Esat, Tmava, Qazim, Demiri-Kunoviku, Filloreta and Krasniqi, Enver. 2021. Panel estimating effects of macroeconomic determinants on inflation: Evidence of Western Balkan, *Cogent Economics & Finance*, 9:1, 1942601, <https://doi.org/10.1080/23322039.2021.1942601>
10. Estrin, S., Uvalic, M. 2016. Foreign Direct Investment in the Western Balkans: What Role Has it Played During Transition? *Comparative Economic Studies* 58, 455–483. <https://doi.org/10.1057/ces.2016.1>
11. Fetai, B. T., Mustafi, B. F., & Fetai, A. B. 2017. An Empirical Analysis Of The Determinants Of Economic Growth In The Western Balkans. *Scientific Annals of Economics and Business*, 64(2), 245–254. <https://doi.org/10.1515/saeb-2017-0016>
12. Gabrisch, H. 2015. Financial Constraints on Growth: Comparing the Balkans to Other Transition Economies. *Eastern European Economics*, 53(4), 309-327. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00128775.2015.1072023>

13. Hausmann, R., Rodrik, D., and Velasco, A. 2006. Getting the Diagnosis Right. *Finance and Development*, 43(1). Available at:
<http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/fandd/2006/03/hausmann.htm>
14. Kryeziu, N., & Durguti, E. A. 2019. The Impact of Inflation on Economic Growth: The Case of Eurozone. *International Journal of Finance & Banking Studies* (2147-4486), 8(1), 01–09.
<https://doi.org/10.20525/ijfbs.v8i1.297>
15. Marmullaku, B., Avdimetaj, K., & Haziri, A. 2021. Impact of Public Investment Through Public Debt on Economic Growth: Empirical Analysis in European Countries in Transition. *Journal Transition Studies Review*, 28(2), 93-104. <https://doi.org/10.14665/1614-4007-28-2-006>
16. Moral-Benito, Enrique. 2009. Determinants of Economic Growth: A Bayesian Panel Data Approach. *Policy Research working paper; no. WPS 4830. World Bank*.
<https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/4027>
17. Murgasova, A, Ilahi, N, Miniane, J, Scott, A, and Vladkova-Hollar. 2015. The Western Balkans 15 Year of Economic Transition- *Washington, D.C. International Monetary Fund*.
<https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/reo/2015/eur/eng/erei0315.htm>
18. Nene, Shelter T., Kehinde D. Ilesanmi, and Mashapa Sekome. 2022. The Effect of Inflation Targeting (IT) Policy on the Inflation Uncertainty and Economic Growth in Selected African and European Countries" *Economies* 10, no. 2: 37.
<https://doi.org/10.3390/economies10020037>
19. Pegkas, P., Staikouras, C., & Tsamadias, C. 2020. On the determinants of economic growth: Empirical evidence from the Eurozone countries. *International Area Studies Review*, 23(2), 210–229. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2233865920912588>
20. Roncaglia de Carvalho. André, Ribeiro S. M. Rafael& Marques M. André. 2018. Economic development and inflation: a theoretical and empirical analysis, *International Review of Applied Economics*, 32:4, 546-565, <https://doi.org/10.1080/02692171.2017.1351531>
21. Ruiyang Hu, Yibai Yang, Zhijie Zheng. 2021. Inflation, endogenous quality increment, and economic growth, *Mathematical Social Sciences*, Volume 114, Pages 72-86,
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.mathsocsci.2021.10.001>
22. Shkodra, N., Sopi, X., Krasniqi, F.X. 2021. The impact of foreign direct investment in the Western Balkan countries - A panel data analysis. *International Journal of Sustainable Development and Planning*, Vol. 16, No. 6, pp. 1185-1190.
<https://doi.org/10.18280/ijstdp.160619>
23. Siong Hook Law, Chee Hung Ng, Ali M. Kutan, Zhi Kei Law. 2021. Public debt and economic growth in developing countries: Nonlinearity and threshold analysis, *Economic Modelling*, Volume 98, Pages 26-40, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.econmod.2021.02.004>
24. Tsounta, Evridiki. 2014. Slowdown in Emerging Markets: Sign of a Bumpy Road Ahead?. *IMF Working Paper No. 14/205*, Available at SSRN:
<https://ssrn.com/abstract=2536900> or <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2536900>
25. Ziberi, B. & Alili, M. 2021. Economic Growth in the Western Balkans: A Panel Analysis. *South East European Journal of Economics and Business*, 16(2) 68-81.
<https://doi.org/10.2478/jeb-2021-0015>

Copyright © 2022 The author/s

This work is licensed under a CC-BY 3.0 license

(*) Corresponding author

Peer review method: Double-blind

Received: 23.03.2022

Accepted: 30.03.2022

Published: 14.06.2022

Original scientific article

DOI: <https://www.doi.org/10.47305/JLIA2282035s>

How to cite:

Sngryan, Simon. 2022. "ASSESSING THE EFFECTS OF TRADE LIBERALIZATION WITH THIRD COUNTRIES: THE CASE OF THE EURASIAN ECONOMIC UNION". Journal of Liberty and International Affairs 8 (2):35-46. <https://e-jlia.com/index.php/jlia/article/view/596>.



ASSESSING THE EFFECTS OF TRADE LIBERALIZATION WITH THIRD COUNTRIES: THE CASE OF THE EURASIAN ECONOMIC UNION

Simon Sngryan^{1*}

¹Armenian State University of Economics - Yerevan, Armenia  <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3738-4899> ✉ simon.sngryan.81@mail.ru

Abstract: *The processes of objectively conditioned integration in the economic, political, legal, and institutional spheres of the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) Member States took place step by step, starting from preferential trade agreements, passing to the customs union, the common market and other stages of integration. This process is accompanied by the gradual deepening of trade liberalization with potential partners. The selection of potential partners should be carried out through a comprehensive and detailed analysis of the structure and volumes of foreign trade of the EEU Member States (Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia) with third parties, their markets structure, existing customs regulation, trade barriers, and possible export potential. The research evaluated the EEU's possible enlargement effects on the Member States' economic indicators. The research aimed to assess the possible consequences of EEU expansion and signing free trade agreements, considering Pakistan, Korea, and Malaysia as potential trade partners. Modeling the effect of an FTA assumes horizontal zeroing of tariffs between partners. Then, using the GTAP model, a new state of general equilibrium was calculated corresponding to the changed parameters of customs and tariff regulation. In this case, most variables, such as change in GDP, production output, and export-import volumes, were estimated, manifesting the economic effect of trade liberalization.*

Keywords: *Liberalization; Openness; Integration; Third Countries; EEU; Member States*

INTRODUCTION

The modern trade liberalization processes are accompanied by the simplification of trade procedures and the gradual elimination of tariff and non-tariff barriers to diversify reciprocal trade flows and then promote the expansion of foreign trade. In these conditions, the increase in economic openness deepens the economic ties between the partner countries, which are the basis for further integration. Trade liberalization is taking place gradually due to the expansion of cooperation at the integrating countries' economic, legal, and institutional levels. The Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) explores the possibility of signing new free trade agreements (FTA). These agreements promote trade and other economic relations between the integrating countries. The ongoing liberalization of trade in the context of EEU membership and choosing a suitable partner for concluding a trade agreement strives to ensure a mutually beneficial trade balance. The free movement of goods creates favorable opportunities for the EEU Member

States, which are manifested as follows: intensification of mutual trade (an increase of EEU market capacity, increase of mutual trade volumes, strengthening of negotiating positions in trade policy).

There are also certain contradictions, which are conditioned by different levels of economic development of the Member States, Russia's predominant position, increasing costs of harmonization and unification of economic policy, and many systemic-structural contradictions. Although most of the EEU Member States have a high degree of economic openness, the mutual openness of the EEU Member States does not allow them to receive multifaceted benefits from the rapprochement of economic processes.

One of the main challenges of integration is the accession of the new members, which needs to determine the level of liberalization of foreign economic activity as the national economies are becoming more sensitive to the external economic environment and the processes taking place there.

The research objective is to assess the possible consequences of EEU expansion and signing free trade agreements considering Pakistan, Korea, and Malaysia as potential trade partners. For this purpose, the effect of an FTA is modeled by the horizontal zeroing of tariffs between Member States (Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia) and Pakistan, Korea, and Malaysia. Then, using the Global Trade Analysis Project (GTAP) model, the possible changes in several socio-economic indicators, such as Gross Domestic Product (GDP), production, and export-import volumes.

In this context, the research highlights that the Member States become more sensitive to the external economic environment, faced with many open economy formation issues related to the degree of liberalization and choice of integration schemes with other countries. This means that further enlargement of the EEU could create opportunities and threats to the economic development of the Member States. The results of identifying potential countries would be expedient for the EEU to conclude free trade agreements.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The impact of openness on national economic development is an exciting area for international institutions and scientists. In recent years, regional and multilateral trade agreements have increased. World Trade Organization (WTO) commitments include non-discrimination, while regional trade agreements provide preferential terms for the Member States. The number of trade agreements, like the share of preferential trade, is growing. The increase in trade agreements is because it is possible to obtain economic benefits for states and establish a more liberal trade regime.

Proponents of trade and investment liberalization view economic openness as one of the critical drivers of economic growth. Policies that make an economy open to trade and investment with the rest of the world are needed for sustained economic growth (IMF 2001). Studies showed that countries that liberalized their trade regimes experienced average annual growth rates about 1.5 percentage points higher than before liberalization (World Bank 2008).

Reducing tariff and non-tariff barriers on imports showed that eliminating trade policy distortions has a powerful and positive impact on import growth (Amelia 2002). Lipsey and

Lancaster (1956) consider that a slight reduction of tariffs leads to increased members' welfare, and complete liberalization of tariffs leads to uncertain results. In the case of a gradual reduction in import duties, the welfare of foreign members will increase and then decrease.

The countries of the Eurasian Economic Union make great efforts to develop the export of goods and to become part of regional and global production chains. Free-trade agreements are the most effective tool which enables the expansion and simplification of access to foreign markets for domestic producers (Vorontsova 2015).

In practice, within the framework of integration, the regional opening has a specific economic efficiency, particularly the liberalization of trade flows, the growth of the gross GDP of the integrating countries, and the improvement of the macroeconomic indicators of the Member States. In this context, it can be emphasized not only the emergence of static but also the emergence of dynamic effects, such as increased competition, which, in its denial, stimulates the introduction and development of new technologies. At the same time, we must take into account that such agreements can have both positive and negative effects on the economy, as well as on a particular sector of the economy, in connection with the emergence of different results, such as growth or slowdown in GDP, investment inflow or outflow, increase or decrease in foreign and mutual trade (Glazatova 2021). The liberalization is not a guarantee of sustainable economic growth. It is an opportunity to access the national markets for goods, services, and capital, and it is an additional impetus for the development of international trade and transnational investments. So, the EEU strategy for forming the FTA framework should consider the possible impact on the national economies of Member States by comparing potential benefits and risks.

METHODOLOGY

In the context of EEU membership, the openness of the Member States' economies and the continued liberalization of trade are of great interest. When choosing a suitable partner for concluding a trade agreement, the EEU Member States strive to ensure a mutually beneficial trade balance, ensuring the most favorable positions in foreign markets. At the beginning of 2021, the Eurasian Economic Commission signed 14 Memoranda of Understanding with the Governments of Third Countries and 9 Memoranda of Understanding with Regional Integration Groups. Moldova, Uzbekistan, and Cuba received observer status, and trade agreements of various depths were signed with Vietnam, Iran, China, Singapore, and Serbia. The EEU is an open integration union, and further enlargements are possible. The liberalization of the economy opens new possibilities for its development; on the other hand, it is not an unconditional benefit. Therefore, within the research framework, we will evaluate the possible impacts of EEU expansion and creating a free trade zone, considering Pakistan, Korea, and Malaysia as potential partners.

The modeling is based on the GTAP general equilibrium model, developed in 2019, which includes the socio-economic development indicators used in the model and customs and tax regulation measures of the countries. In order to clarify the results of economic and mathematical modeling, the GTAP model for EEU has adjusted the customs protection standards for 2020. In the case of Pakistan, Korea, and Malaysia, use the most recent data in the World

Bank, Intracen, and WTO databases. The analysis also includes all the possible areas in the model (rice: seed, paddy (not husked), wheat, other grains, and others, a total of 65 sectors). The current model evaluates the relative (percentage) changes in the foreign trade volume between the EEU Member States and potential prospective partners such as Pakistan, Malaysia, and Korea. Using mate tables between GTAP model sector nomenclature and harmonized commodity description and coding systems of EEU based on actual recorded trade statistics, the absolute changes in trade volumes by sectors of the GTAP model will be estimated.

CONDUCTING RESEARCH AND RESULTS

Modeling the effect of creating a free trade area with a country or another presupposes horizontal zeroing of tariffs by the EEU Member States and zeroing of tariffs by partner countries. After that, the software calculated a new equilibrium state corresponding to the new customs regulation standards. A specific change of variables occurs, which is the economic result of liberalization.

The quantitative part of the research focused on data collection that characterizes trade relations and policy development parameters. Quantitative indicators on foreign trade statistics, such as export-import volume, mutual trade volume between the EEU Member States and third countries, foreign trade commodity and geographical structure, were analyzed.

GTAP model makes it possible to estimate the relative changes in several indicators of socio-economic development, including changes in GDP and other indicators. The possible results of the model as a result of customs liberalization with Korea, Malaysia, and Pakistan are as follows: change in GDP (%), change in output volumes of model sectors (%), change in the possible impact on the labor market (%), change in the volume of imports from a partner country to EEU Member States (%), change in the volume of exports to a partner country (%).

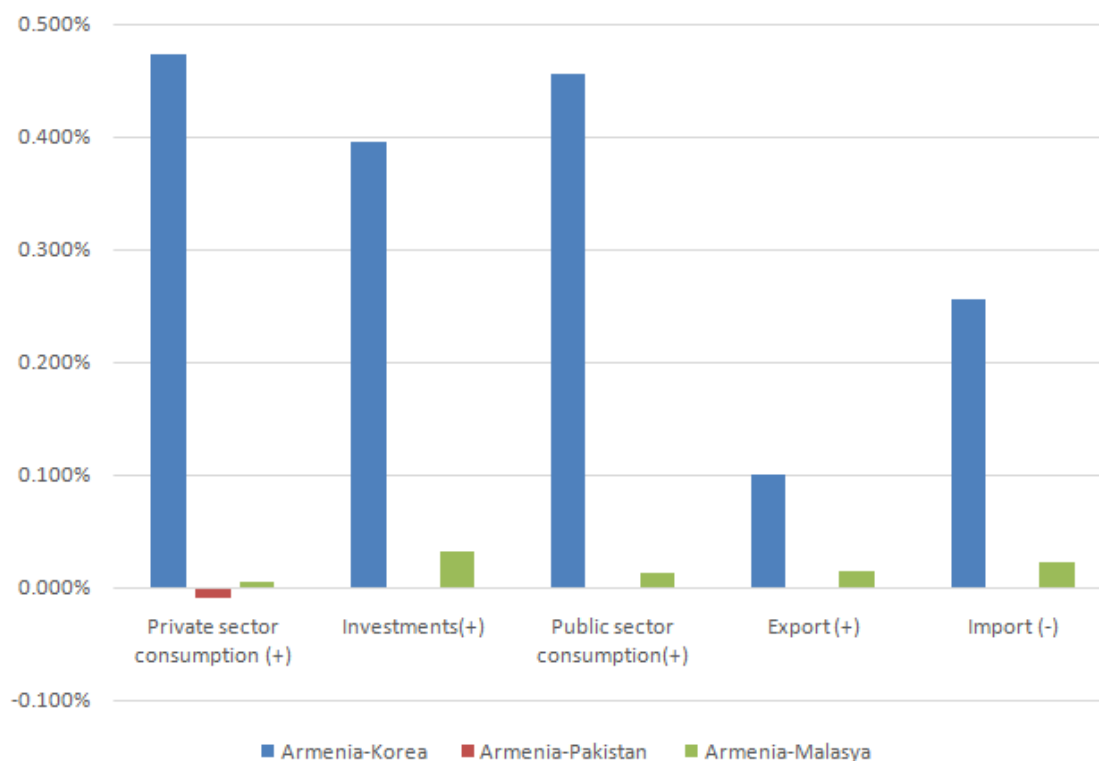
Application of GTAP Model Analysis

The calculations made in the GTAP model show that as a result of trade liberalization, there will be a relative change in GDP in the EEU Member States; in particular, relative GDP growth for all EEU Member States will take place in case of trade liberalization with Korea. From the obtained results, the relevant results were singled out in Table 1.

Table 1: Relative Volume Change of GDP in the EEU Member States, % (Source: Own compilation)

Countries	Pakistan	Malaysia	Korea
Armenia	-0.000142	0.000145	0.037906
Belarus	0.006138	-0.000851	-0.018985
Kazakhstan	0.000096	-0.000053	-0.001822
Kyrgyzstan	0.000454	-0.000591	-0.030080
Russia	-0.000386	0.000765	0.011310

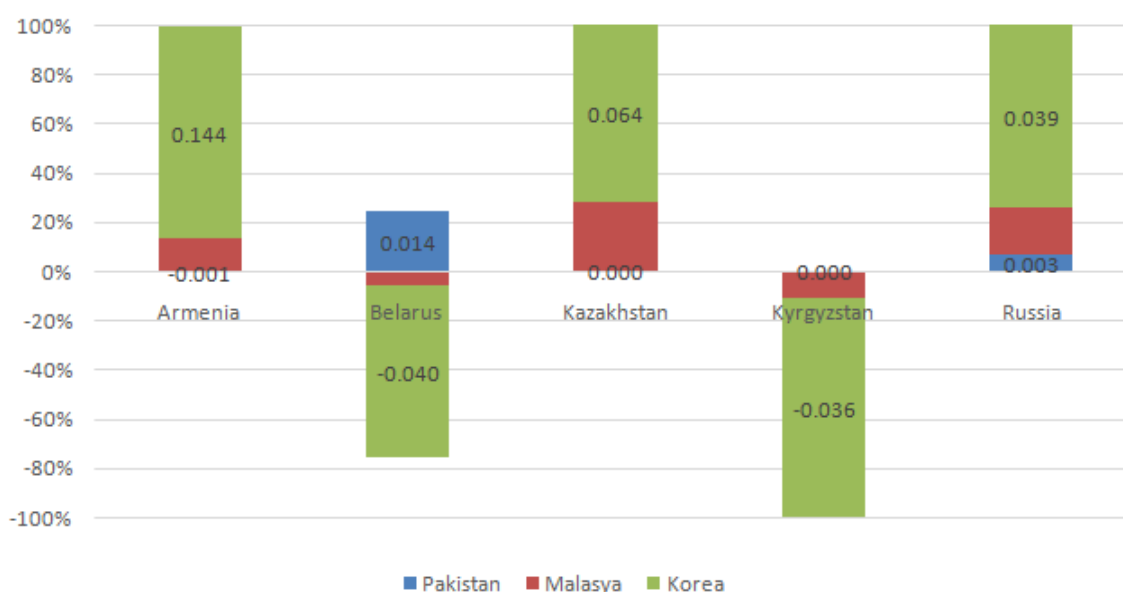
In the case of Armenia, GDP growth in value terms will occur in Korea (0.460%) and Malaysia (0.006%). In both cases, all components of GDP, except imports, will change in a positive direction. A comparison of means by variables is shown in Graph 1.



Graph 1: GDP Change in Value Terms, % (Armenia) (Source: Own compilation)

In the case of Belarus, GDP growth (in value terms) will be 0.039% (potential partner Korea) due to increased public-private sector consumption, while other components of GDP are changing in a negative direction. Trade liberalization with potential trading partners can lead to GDP growth in Kazakhstan, with all components of GDP changing positively. This figure is higher for Korea (0.023%), followed by Malaysia (0.021%) and Pakistan (0.003%). In contrast to Kazakhstan, the results for Kyrgyzstan recorded a decline in GDP, especially in the case of Korea (-0.325%) and Malaysia (-0.016%), with almost all components of GDP changing negatively, except for exports. The liberalization of trade relations with Russia positively impacts GDP growth because of positive changes in all components of GDP.

The change in the volume of GDP will also lead to a change in the volume of production in the Member States. Graph 2 shows the change in production volume in the Member States.



Graph 2: Possible Change in Production Volumes in the EEU Member States, %
(Source: Own compilation)

In the case of trade liberalization with Pakistan, production volumes will increase by 0.014% in Belarus and by 0.003% in Russia. Liberalization of trade relations with Korea will increase production in Armenia (0.144%), Kazakhstan (0.064%), and Russia (0.039), while in Belarus and Kyrgyzstan, production will decline by -0.04% and -0.036%, respectively.

In the case of Malaysia, the production volume change will be as follows: Armenia - 0.022%, Belarus -(-0.003%), Kazakhstan - 0.024%, Kyrgyzstan -(-0.005%), and Russia - 0.01%.

In 55% of the product groups included in the study in the studied countries, there is a negative impact on the production level in Armenia.

The GTAP model calculates the impact of trade liberalization on imports and exports of the EEU Member States. This model assumes zero tariffs by partner countries, which could significantly impact foreign trade.

Table 2: Relative Changes in the Volume of Imports in the EEU Member States, % (partner country Pakistan)
(Source: Own compilation)

GTAP Model Sectors	Armenia	Belarus	Kazakhstan	Kyrgyzstan	Russia
Rice: seed, paddy (not husked)	140.553	141.089	140.181	140.538	140.015
Wool: wool, silk, and other raw animal materials used in textile	68.653	68.983	68.6	68.627	68.426
Gas	138.066	138.06	138.076	138.105	138.121
Other meat	811.684	813.915	811.9	154.357	812.286

Milk: dairy products	119.784	120.188	119.905	119.817	120.092
Sugar	178.29	1,123.52	178.413	178.393	178.35
Other food	74.772	45.831	47.242	35.457	67.169
Manufacture of textiles	100.667	98.057	109.904	104.705	103.525
Manufacture of wearing apparel	105.005	107.407	103.841	111.624	107.079

Table 2 shows the GTAP model sectors, which registered relatively significant growth. These calculations also applied to Malaysia and Korea. Based on these calculations, it is possible to compare highly sensitive products between different manufacturers of the EEU Member States. From the point of view of industrial cooperation of the EEU Member States, Sensitive products from the point of view of industrial cooperation are machine-building products, light industry products, metallurgical products, production of machinery, equipment for forestry, and production of construction materials. The Eurasian Economic Commission has also approved many sensitive, including agricultural and industrial goods, the production and trade of which in the EEU have a significant economic impact on the development of Member States. In addition, the Eurasian Economic Commission approves a list of sensitive goods that may be subject to changes in import duties. Sensitive agricultural commodities are milk, dairy products, meat and meat products, vegetables, fruits, rice, sugar, oilseeds, and their processing products, tobacco, and cotton.

Based on the list of sensitive products of industrial cooperation of the EEU Member States and the study of import volumes in case of trade liberalization with the countries that are potential trade partners, we will present the main product groups with high sensitivity of imports from those countries. The relevant results were singled out in Table 3.

Table 3: List of Sensitive Products (partner Pakistan) (Source: Own data)

Armenia	Belarus	Kazakhstan	Kyrgyzstan	Russia
Other meat	Sugar	Other meat	Sugar	Other meat
Sugar	Other meat	Sugar	Other meat	Sugar
Manufacture of fabricated metal products	Manufacture of electrical equipment	Rice: seed, paddy (not husked)	Manufacture of electrical equipment	Rice: seed, paddy (not husked)
Rice: seed, paddy (not husked)	Rice: seed, paddy (not husked)	Cattle meat	Rice: seed, paddy (not husked)	Cattle meat
Gas	Cattle meat	Gas	Cattle meat	Gas
Manufacture of electrical equipment	Gas	Milk: dairy products	Gas	Manufacture of fabricated metal products

Milk: dairy products	Milk: dairy products	Manufacture of other transport equipment	Milk: dairy products	Manufacture of electrical equipment
Non-ferrous metals	Manufacture of wearing apparel	Manufacture of fabricated metal products	Non-ferrous metals	Milk: dairy products
Manufacture of wearing apparel	Manufacture of textiles	Manufacture of textiles	Manufacture of fabricated metal products	Manufacture of wearing apparel

Among these products sensitive to imports from Pakistan, metallurgical products, other metals, clothing, textiles, and transport-engineering products are sensitive from the point of view of EEU industrial cooperation. In addition, the lists for sensitive products are formed for Malaysia and Korea.

In the case of Malaysia, the products of the food industry and gas have high sensitivity. Other products of transport engineering, clothing, and metal products are sensitive from the point of view of the EEU industrial cooperation. In the case of Korea, meat, sugar, and rice are again highly sensitive, and the most sensitive products in terms of EEU industrial cooperation are transport machinery and metallurgy.

The modeling results show that trade liberalization may increase exports from the EEU Member States to partner countries. However, it should be noted that some product groups in the model show high growth potential. However, it is impossible to export these products to potential trade partner countries depending on the country's specialization. To this end, we have studied the current trade turnover with these countries and assessed the export potential of these products. The calculations show that in terms of the products included in the model, automobile products have a 493.96% export potential from Armenia to Pakistan, other meat products 397.31%, dairy products 278.7%, tobacco and beverages 173.86%. Exports of tobacco, beverages (416.49%), rubber-plastic products (112.68%), woodworking products (79.88%), and mineral products (46.22) will increase from Armenia to Malaysia. Armenia can increase exports of dairy products, oilseeds, and food industry products (765.14%) to Korea.

The results show that Belarus may have up to a 554% increase in exports of certain products, and in the case of Belarus, this increase is in line with Belarus' specialization. Exports from Belarus to Pakistan may increase for the following products: electrical equipment (484.06%), automotive products (415.15%), metalworking products (291.1%), and dairy products (276.93%). Belarus currently exports mainly to Malaysia's food industry and chemical industry products, which may increase by 21.72% and 0.6%, respectively. A significant percentage increase may be due to rubber, plastics, automotive products, metals, etc. Exports of other meat products, clothing, electrical equipment, pharmaceuticals, minerals, and wood from Belarus to Korea will increase.

Kazakhstan has export opportunities to Pakistan in the field of electrical equipment (902.7%), rubber-plastic products (200.88), metalworking products (187.82%), and metals (132.7%). Exports of tobacco, beverages (28508.65%), minerals (124.68%), and oil (43.81%) have significant growth potential for exports from Kazakhstan to Malaysia.

Kazakhstan currently exports oil to Korea (growth will be 29.37%), crude oil (11.99%), and other metals (22.91%). However, dairy products, oilseeds, fruits, and vegetables have export potential.

In the case of Kyrgyzstan, there is an increase in exports of many product groups to Pakistan. However, in this case, there are specific asymmetries in the specialization. Kyrgyzstan has not had significant exports to Malaysia in recent years; however, exports of textiles may increase by 93.42%, and vegetables and fruits by 16.76%. Because of trade liberalization, Kyrgyzstan may increase exports of livestock (2334.23%), food industry (149.67%), textiles (86.74%), and crop products (80.1%).

The market of Pakistan is attractive for Russia in terms of exports of other meat products (397.27%), metal products (288.26%), automotive products (251.07%), electrical equipment, and minerals. At the same time, exports of these products to Pakistan have increased in recent years. The Malaysian market is quite promising for Russia, especially the products that are currently exported to Malaysia, in particular tobacco, beverages (416.49%), automotive products (166.80%), and rubber-plastic products (112.68%), and metals have growth potential. For Russia, commodity groups with potential for export growth largely coincide with the current structure of exports. In particular, the export of oil with the highest share in value will increase by 28.07%, while coal - by 0.2% and gas - by 115.48%. Oilseed crops, other grains, and other meat products have a great potential for export from Russia to Malaysia.

The model allowed calculating the relative change in the demand for diverse workforces. With the liberalization of trade with Pakistan, the number of employed or unskilled workers in the agricultural sector in Armenia will be reduced by (-0.003%) and (-0.029%), respectively. In the case of Malaysia and Korea, employment will increase in almost all qualifications. The results show that Belarus will have a relative reduction in the number of professionals with different qualifications in all three-partner countries. Only Pakistan will show a relative increase in the number of employees in the service sector. Liberalization of trade relations with all prospective countries will lead to a relative increase in the labor force in Kazakhstan, while in Kyrgyzstan - the opposite. As for Russia, there will be a relative increase in the labor force of almost all partner countries with different qualifications (except for the 'Korea-Agriculture' column).

The analysis of the studied indicators for concluding the free trade agreement with Pakistan, Malaysia, and Korea showed contradictory results at the level of the Member States and individual indicators. It is relatively beneficial for the EEU Member States to sign a free trade agreement with Korea.

There are also other factors and other countries which have not been examined in this paper. Still, the presented results clearly show that the GTAP model allows us to evaluate the impact of trade liberalization on several indicators of EEU Member States.

CONCLUSION

The research found that using analysis tools and approaches based on the GTAP model allows to perform complete and detailed analysis and get results of a possible change of GDP, production, and import-export volumes of the Member States in case of possible enlargement of the EEU with Malaysia, Korea, and Pakistan. The research also found that the difference in the

EEU Member States' specialization and their different level of involvement in foreign trade influence the possible unequal nature of the results. The research results show that trade liberalization with Korea, Pakistan, and Malaysia is multivalued and can affect Member States' GDP, production volumes, import-export volumes, and structure. The research allowed finding out the sensitivity to import products in the EEU Member States. The used methodology identifies potential countries in expanding the participation of the EEU in free trade agreements, including the choice of partners and its justification.

COMPLIANCE WITH ETHICAL STANDARDS

Acknowledgments:

Not applicable.

Funding:

Not applicable.

Statement of human rights:

This article does not contain any studies with human participants performed by any authors.

Statement on the welfare of animals:

This article does not contain any studies with animals performed by any authors.

Informed consent:

Not applicable.

REFERENCES

1. Glazatova M., Hachkverdyan D., et al. 2021. "Assessment of the integration processes in EEU in the field of trade". National Research University, Higher School of economics. ISBN 978-5-7598-2274-5 (e-book).
2. Hertel, T. 1997. "Structure of GTAP. Global Trade Analysis: Modeling and Applications". Cambridge University Press.
3. IMF. 2001. Global Trade Liberalization and the Developing Countries.
<https://www.imf.org/external/np/exr/ib/2001/110801.htm>
4. Lipsey R., Lancaster K. 1956. "The Review of Economic Studies". Volume 24, Issue 1, p. 11–32.
5. Santos-Paulino, A. 2002. "The Effects of Trade Liberalization on Imports in Selected developing Countries". *World Development*, Volume 30, Issue 6, p.959-974.
6. Vorontsova, N.A. 2015. "Trade Liberalization within the Eurasian Economic Union (the Case of the EAEU-Vietnam Agreement)". *Moscow Journal of International Law* (4), (in Russ.), p.103-115.
7. Wacziarg, R., Welch, K. 2008. "Trade Liberalization and Growth: New Evidence". *The World Bank Economic Review*, 22(2), p.187–231.
8. Zuev V., Ostrovskaya E., Skryabina V., Kalachyhin, H. 2021. "Features of the EAEU Strategy for the Formation of an FTA Network". *HSE Economic Journal, National Research University Higher School of Economics*, vol. 25(1), p.42-64.

Copyright © 2022 The author/s

This work is licensed under a CC-BY 3.0 license

(*) Corresponding author

Peer review method: Double-blind

Received: 09.02.2022

Accepted: 21.03.2022

Published: 14.06.2022

Original scientific article

DOI: <https://www.doi.org/10.47305/JLIA2282047n>

How to cite:

Nguyen Nghi, Thanh, Hang Tran Thu, and Thao Tran Dinh. 2022. "THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PUBLIC SERVICE MOTIVATION, WORK ENJOYMENT, AND TASK PERFORMANCE: A PRELIMINARY STUDY OF HEALTHCARE WORKERS IN VIETNAM". Journal of Liberty and International Affairs 8 (2):47-60. <https://e-jlia.com/index.php/jlia/article/view/597>.




THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PUBLIC SERVICE MOTIVATION, WORK ENJOYMENT, AND TASK PERFORMANCE: A PRELIMINARY STUDY OF HEALTHCARE WORKERS IN VIETNAM

Nguyen Nghi Thanh^{1*}, Tran Thu Hang², Tran Dinh Thao³

¹Hanoi University of Home Affairs, Vietnam  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0791-8063> ✉ thanhnn7899@gmail.com

²Hanoi University of Home Affairs, Vietnam  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1597-1470> ✉ tranthuhang11@gmail.com

³Hanoi University of Home Affairs, Vietnam  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0131-5157> ✉ thaotd62@gmail.com

Abstract: *This study aimed to examine the impact of health workers' public service motivation during their participation in response to the Covid-19 pandemic at a time of the highest number of infections and deaths in Vietnam. This study was conducted through a cross-sectional survey using an intentional sampling technique (n=200). In addition, Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was applied to illustrate the proposed hypotheses. We found that compassion in the workplace, self-sacrifice, and attraction to policy-making impacted work enjoyment positively and significantly. In particular, there was a positive and significant relationship between work enjoyment and task performance but no evidence of the relationship between Commitment to the public interest and work enjoyment. This study further demonstrates the importance of public service motivation of health workers in pandemic response, as previous studies have found. This finding suggests that the government and policymakers in Vietnam should develop policies to promote health workers' public service motivation during their engagement in response to the health crisis.*

Keywords: *Work Enjoyment; Task Performance; Public Service Motivation; Medical Staff; Vietnam*

INTRODUCTION

In dealing with the Covid-19 pandemic in Vietnam, all medical forces have made tremendous sacrifices and extraordinary efforts. Numerous doctors and nurses volunteer to assist in Covid-19 hotspots. In the prolonged fierce battle with Covid-19, their enthusiasm and Commitment to pandemic hotspots and willingness to confront obstacles, disadvantages, and self-sacrifice are always praised. Their silent sacrifices should be honored across Vietnam as the fight against Covid-19 reaches its pinnacle (Phong Thu 2021). There is increasing interest in applying public service motivation in managing the public sector workforce (O'Leary 2019). Public service motivation is a concept that seems natural to healthcare workers, providing them with work enjoyment, attraction to public policy-making, and Commitment to public service

values. During the Covid-19 pandemic, it is necessary to test the validity of the public service motivation in the healthcare sector. Many qualitative studies have discovered that during the epidemics, they get compelled to sacrifice their happiness, rest, and family time to take care of their patients' health and bring good health to their patients. Mastering healthcare workers' motivation is crucial since they require incentives to keep them motivated to satisfy their patients and improve their effectiveness (Huber and Schubert 2019).

According to many studies, to improve the quality of public services, it is necessary to have a high public service motivation (Nurung *et al.* 2019). Individuals who value public services are more interested in providing them and the social consequences of collective inaction, seeing themselves as crucial in preserving public goods (Heine *et al.* 2021). Therefore, further empirical studies are needed to assess whether their public service motivation directly affects health care quality during the Covid-19. Healthcare workers in Vietnam have been undergoing the most challenging time due to the increasing number of infections and deaths caused by Covid-19. The dread and anxiety among them about the Covid-19 pandemic's repercussions are palpable. Therefore, this study looks into the relationship between public service motivation, work enjoyment, and task performance. The new findings of this study will fill the theoretical gap on public service motivation while providing the basis for the government to timely implement policies to promote health workers to improve their task performance.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Public Service Motivation

Public service motivation is defined as a desire by employees to contribute to society. It refers to an emotional response and empathy for others as self-sacrifice that reflects a shared desire to put the benefit of the community above personal interests (Vandenabeele 2013). It manifests in an individual's willingness to engage in and contribute to improving public services and the common good, exhibiting a sense of personal responsibility, dedication to society, and self-sacrifice (Anderfuhren-Biget 2012). Public service motivation can be seen as an incentive for individuals to contribute to society and help others. The factors constituting the public service motivation include attraction to policy-making, Commitment to the public interest, compassion, and self-sacrifice (Vandenabeele 2013).

Attraction to Policy-making

Attraction to policy-making is a fundamental component of public service motivation because individuals work in public institutions in political settings (Coursey *et al.* 2008). It involves political power and participation in the public administration process. It depends on individual emotions rather than rational motives, manifesting as extraversion and openness to new experiences (Jang 2012).

Commitment to the Public Interest

Commitment to the public interest is so complex and diverse that it is difficult to define and use the concept (Dadashpoor and Sheydayi 2021). It is geared towards doing good in the public interest. It is associated with working time and political influence and is significant for democracy. It is also associated with a reduction in the rate of employees in a stressful and demanding work environment. It benefits public organizations in situations that require employees' considerable efforts, resilience, and self-sacrifice (Gustavo *et al.* 2021).

Compassion in the Workplace

Compassion in the workplace is defined as showing affection, concern, and tenderness toward subordinates or colleagues without expecting any organizational benefits (Eldor and Shoshani 2016). It incorporates emotional aspects such as emotional labor, including sensitivity, responsiveness, and service orientation exist in the workplace and positively impacts employee performance. It is an emotional coping mechanism that is particularly prominent in public places of work, where employees frequently encounter stressful situations involving civic demands and administrative workloads (Tummers *et al.* 2015).

Self-Sacrifice

According to public service motivation theory, some individuals have a strong desire to make their sacrifices to serve the public interests (Perry and Wise 1990), to motivate themselves to volunteer, and do not evade by taking on an outcome-oriented concern for public welfare (Francois 2000), to feel pity for the others, and make a commitment to the public interests to motivate to make personal sacrifices and serve the public interests (Kim and Vandenabeele 2010). Self-sacrifice promotes beliefs and attitudes related to public service, commits to providing a public service that no one else is willing to provide despite its benefits to society, and takes risks (Piatak and Holt 2020).

Task Performance

Task performance is the output of a process. It is affected by four factors: ability, task knowledge, environment, and individual motivation (Brewer and Walker 2013), related to employees being under pressure to perform effectively. It results from personal contribution to the public organization's mission (Jørgensen and Bozeman 2007).

Work Enjoyment

Work enjoyment is a happy or positive emotional state due to a job appraisal or experience. It is related to the emotional dedication offered, the characteristics that constitute the work environment and the work itself (Churchil *et al.* 1974), and individuals' evaluations of their duties on matters crucial (Sempañe *et al.* 2002).

Relationship between Public Service Motivation and Task Performance

Individuals with high public service motivation do better and harder, exert more effort, and deliver better quality. They score higher on work performance and get more satisfied with their job position and organization (Andersen *et al.* 2014). Public service motivation is favorably associated with individual performance in the public sector. It motivates them to work harder as they accept joint work with high task significance (Perry *et al.* 2010).

Relationship between Public Service Motivation and Work Enjoyment

Work enjoyment is related to public service motivation since it positively affects an individual's behavior in the workplace. It explains their overall perception and attitude towards work, originates from within, and causes them to get internally stimulated (Walker *et al.* 2011). It also increases task performance and is linked to the ability to finish desired activities. There is a link between public service motivation and the quality and happiness of one's employment, and organizations are no exception (Walker *et al.* 2011). Allowing public servants to recognize the societal consequences of their work can boost their motivation (Grant 2008). The authors have developed a research model based on the literature review, as illustrated in Figure 1.

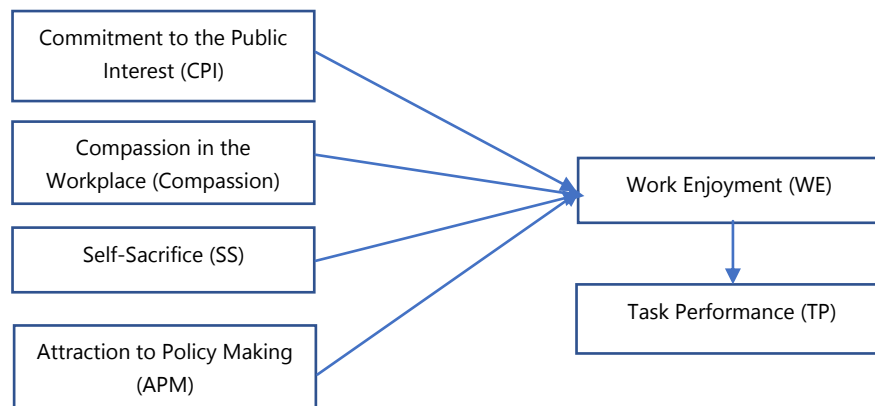


Figure 1: The Research Model (Source: Authors' depiction)

The following theories have been made based on the above research documents:

H1: Healthcare workers' Commitment to the public interest has a positive and significant relationship with their work enjoyment.

H2: Healthcare workers' compassion has a positive and significant relationship with their work enjoyment.

H3: Healthcare workers' self-sacrifice positively and significantly relates to their work enjoyment.

H4: Attraction to policy-making positively and significantly relates to work enjoyment.

H5: Healthcare workers' work enjoyment positively and significantly relates to their task performance.

RESEARCH METHODS

The research team used a qualitative method by in-depth interviews with psychology and medical researchers to adjust the scale and improve the questionnaire to suit the characteristics of the survey area. The questionnaire was built on the overview results and experts' opinions, including two parts.

Part 1 collects information about the research participants' demographics, such as age, gender, education level, and occupation.

Part 2 collects data on public service motivation, work enjoyment, and task performance. Public service motivation data was collected by using Perry's Public Service Motivation Scale edited by Kim (2009), consisting of 14 items, work enjoyment data by using part of the scale which was built by Johri, Misra, and Bhattacharjee (2016) that consists of 5 items, and task performance data by using part of the scale was built by Ramos, Pedro, Juan Ramón, Elena, and Linda (2019) consisting of 4 items.

Two professional translators translated the English questionnaire was translate into Vietnamese. The translation was done under specific rules to adapt to various Vietnamese cultures. A bilingual professional education expert contributed his ideas to this version to generate a final one. Then, it was pre-tested on 40 participants, and following that, minor tweaks were made to perfect the questions and make them easier to understand. Finally, it was used for the official survey. Participating in the study is a selection of adults living in Hochiminh city, Binh Duong, and Bac Ninh provinces. The questionnaire was directly sent to them by the non-random sampling method. The survey team received 200 valid answer sheets, achieving a response rate of 100%. Table 1 below shows their demographic statistics (Table 1).

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Survey Participants (Source: Authors' calculation)

		Occupation					
		Consulting Doctor	Epidemiologist	General Practitioner	Laboratory Technician	Nurse	Physician
		Row N %	Row N %	Row N %	Row N %	Row N %	Row N %
Gender	Female	20.7%	15.3%	20.7%	15.3%	13.5%	14.4%
	Male	16.9%	21.3%	14.6%	18.0%	9.0%	20.2%
Age	25-30 years	21.9%	18.8%	6.2%	25.0%	12.5%	15.6%
	31-35 years	15.6%	18.8%	9.4%	21.9%	9.4%	25.0%
	36-40 years	14.3%	22.9%	25.7%	20.0%	5.7%	11.4%
	41-45 years	23.5%	2.9%	32.4%	11.8%	11.8%	17.6%
	46-50 years	20.0%	25.7%	14.3%	8.6%	14.3%	17.1%
	Above 50 years	18.8%	18.8%	18.8%	12.5%	15.6%	15.6%
Education	Ambulance technicians	25.8%	12.9%	16.1%	12.9%	6.5%	25.8%

	Bachelor of Medicine	6.1%	15.2%	15.2%	18.2%	21.2%	24.2%
	Bachelor of Public Health	23.3%	26.7%	6.7%	20.0%	10.0%	13.3%
	Bachelor of Surgery	17.9%	10.7%	21.4%	17.9%	17.9%	14.3%
	Doctor of Medicine	18.9%	24.3%	24.3%	13.5%	5.4%	13.5%
	Master of Medicine	22.0%	17.1%	22.0%	17.1%	9.8%	12.2%

RESEARCH RESULTS

The software SPSS 20 and AMOS are used to analyze the reliability of the scales, the exploratory factors, and structural equation modeling (SEM).

Reliability Analysis

Table 2 reveals that the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient for all items is higher than 0.7, qualifying it for further investigation. Good Composite Reliability for a defined structure with five to eight items meets the minimum threshold of 0.80 (Hair *et al.* 2010). The Attraction to Policymaking with Composite Reliability=0.833 is valid, as shown in Table 2. Composite Reliability=0.792, Compassion=0.786, Self-sacrifice=0.784, Work enjoyment=0.757 (closer to 0.80) is acceptable for the Commitment to the public interest. The acceptance threshold of Average Variance Extracted from Entries is higher than 0.50 (Hair *et al.* 2010). Table 2 shows the entries of the Average Variance Extracted with Attraction to policymaking=0.500 and Work enjoyment=0.510. The rest of the entries, Commitment to the public interest=0.489, Compassion=0.479, Self-sacrifice=0.476, and Task performance=0.478, are still acceptable for further analysis (Hair *et al.* 2010).

Table 2: Reliability Analysis (Source: Authors' calculation)

Factors	Cronbach's alpha	Average Variance Extracted	Composite Reliability
Commitment to the public interest	0.756	0.489	0.792
Attraction to policymaking	0.730	0.500	0.833
Compassion in the workplace	0.793	0.479	0.786
Self-sacrifice	0.783	0.476	0.784
Work enjoyment	0.834	0.510	0.757
Task performance	0.786	0.478	0.732

Factor Analysis

The condition for exploratory factor analysis is to satisfy the following requirements: the Factor loading > 0.5. $0.5 \leq KMO \leq 1$: the factor KMO (Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin) is the index used to

consider the appropriateness of factor analysis (Hair 2010). Table 3 shows that the Bartlett test is of statistical significance (Sig.=0.00), the factor KMO=0.904 (>0.5). Bartlett testing is of statistical significance with Sig.=0.000 (< 0.05), the observed variables are correlated with each other in the population. Thus, the variables are valid for factor analysis (Snedecor *et al.* 1989). Factor loading is the criterion to ensure the practical significance of factor analysis: Factor loading > 0.3 is considered minimal; Factor loading > 0.4 is considered crucial; Factor loading > 0.5 is considered practically significant. Table 3 indicates that the factor loading of all variables is higher than 0.5, which means that the factor analysis is valid. It also proves the validity of Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings of 6 factors=63.638 % (>0.5 %). Initial Eigenvalues of 6 factors=1.080 (>1.00) are viable (Hair 2010).

Table 3: Rotated Component Matrix (Source: Authors' calculation)

Rotated Component Matrix ^a						
	Component					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
WE4	.755					
WE2	.754					
WE1	.702					
WE3	.697					
WE5	.633					
TP3		.785				
TP2		.723				
TP4		.712				
TP1		.650				
SS3			.758			
SS1			.736			
SS4			.691			
SS2			.665			
Compassion4				.732		
Compassion3				.701		
Compassion1				.692		
Compassion2				.627		
CPI3					.777	
CPI1					.738	
CPI2					.735	
APM1						.773
APM3						.746
APM2						.682
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.						
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.						
a. Rotation converged in 6 iterations.						

Structural Equation Modeling

SEM is an extension of the general linear model (GLM) that combines all techniques such as multivariate regression, factor analysis, and correlation analysis between factors to examine the complex relationship in the model. It calculates stable (recursive) and non-recursive relationships, direct and indirect effects, measurement error, and residual correlation, among other things. In addition, it gives the freedom to choose the best model from a list of options (Kline 2011). To evaluate the suitability of the SEM model, it requires the Chi-Square (χ^2) testing, Root-Mean-Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) procedure, along with the confidence interval standardized-root-mean square residual (SRMR), Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), and Comparative Fit Index (CFI). It is suggested that a good fitting model should have values of CFI and TLI $\geq .90$, RMSEA and SRMR $\leq .08$ (Kline 2011).

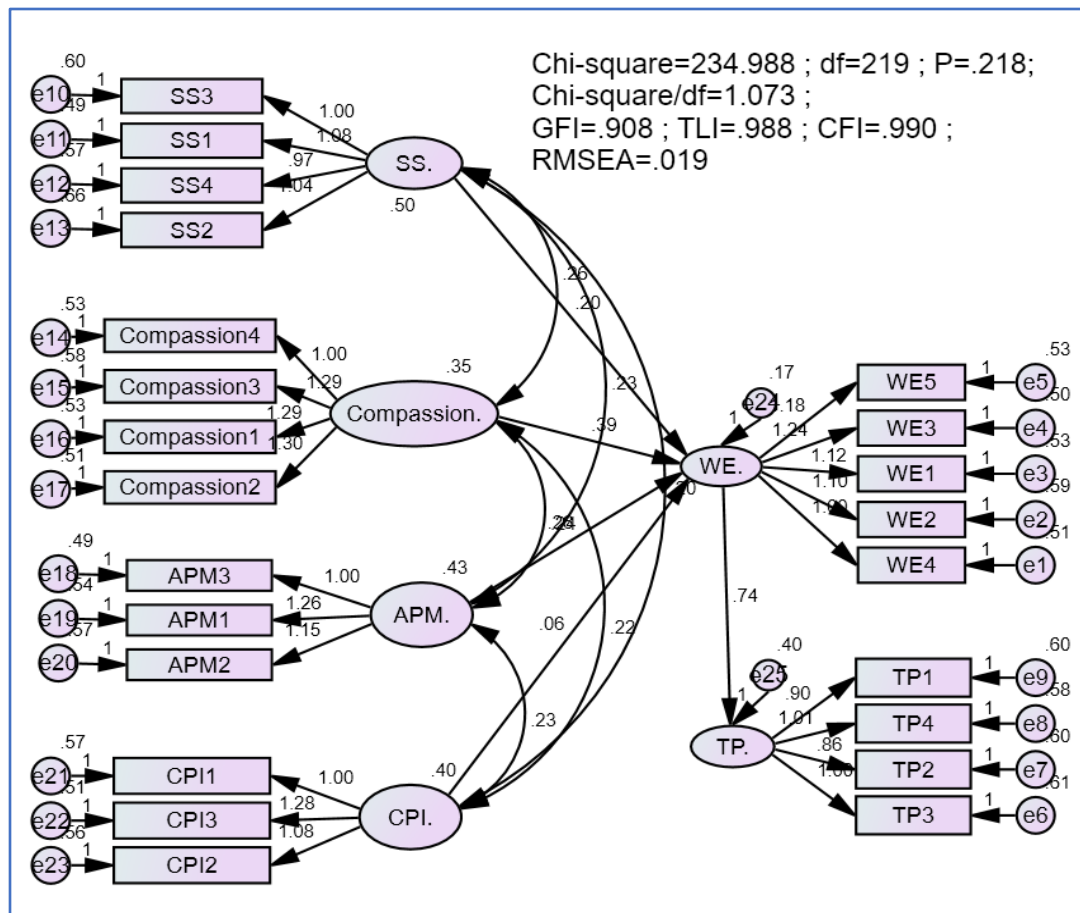


Figure 2: The Results of SEM Analysis (Source: Authors' calculation)

The analysis results (Figure 2) illustrate that the model test coefficients satisfy the standard requirements of the SEM model: Chi-square=234.988; Df=219; P-value=0.218 (P-value > 0.05); Chi-square/df=1.073; GIF=0.908 (GIF>0.9); TLF=0.988; RMSEA=0.019 (Kline 2011).

Table 6: Regression Weights (Source: Authors' calculation)

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Label
WE	<---	SS	0.203	0.090	2.243	0.025	Accepted
WE	<---	Compassion	0.388	0.138	2.809	0.005	Accepted
WE	<---	APM	0.255	0.104	2.451	0.014	Accepted
WE	<---	CPI	0.059	0.101	.584	0.559	Not Accepted
TP	<---	WE	0.737	0.124	5.936	***	Accepted

The results of SEM analysis (Table 6) show that hypothesis H1 (Health workers' Commitment to the public interest has a positive and significant relationship with their work enjoyment) is rejected as reliability is not of statistical significance ($p=0.559$). The remaining hypotheses are acceptable.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Discussion

Firstly, the research results (Table 6) show that medical staff's work enjoyment factor has a positive and significant relationship to their Task performance with the largest regression weight ($\beta=0.737$) and the 95 percent confidence level ($p=0.000$). This outcome is consistent with prior findings from non-medical sector studies. It means that work enjoyment is related to completing desired tasks and boosting productivity (Walker *et al.* 2011).

Secondly, the research findings (Table 6) show that medical staff's compassion has a positive and significant relationship with their work enjoyment with regression weight ($\beta = 0.388$) and the 95 percent confidence level ($p=0.005$). This result is in line with previous findings from non-medical research (Tavares *et al.* 2019). This means that even if they lack the necessary facilities and equipment, their motivations are likely to assist them in overcoming these obstacles and providing the best possible treatment for their patients (Valdez and Nichols 2013).

Thirdly, the findings of the study (Table 6) reveal that the factor attraction to policy-making has a positive and substantial link with work enjoyment, as evidenced by the regression coefficient ($\beta=0.255$) and the 95 percent confidence level ($p=0.014$). Each healthcare worker can be more productive if a corresponding reward for their participation in the policy-making process increases their work enjoyment (Rubel *et al.* 2020).

Fourthly, the research findings (Table 6) indicate that healthcare workers' self-sacrifice has a positive and significant relationship with their work enjoyment with regression weight ($\beta=0.203$) and the 95 percent confidence level ($p=0.025$). The results of this study are similar to those of prior studies in other domains. Self-sacrifice motivates healthcare workers, as well as other employees in the public sector, to volunteer and not evade by introducing an outcome-oriented concern for public welfare (Francois 2000), feeling pity for the well-being of other people, and being committed to the public interest in general (Perry and Wise 1990).

CONCLUSION

The study findings reveal that public service motivation is linked to health workers' behavior and work performance. However, health workers in Vietnam lack the required conditions to commit to the public interest due to a lack of recognition, promotion, monitoring, openness, accountability, and the mechanism that motivates them. It is among the factors impeding the country's development, with negative consequences in various fields such as economy, culture, society, and politics (Thu Hang Cao 2020). It is linked to low public service quality (Nguyen *et al.* 2017).

According to the study findings, public service motivation has a favorable and significant impact on work enjoyment and performance. Therefore, it is of interest to policymakers in the health sector in Vietnam, as it is widely considered a significant determinant of the performance of medical staff. To improve workers' motivation in the health industry, the Vietnamese government must develop appropriate policies and mechanisms. Understanding what motivates people to carry out social responsibility and offer public services is crucial to public administration, and it is critical to design motivational policies for public sector workers (Heine *et al.* 2021).

Limitations

Like other experimental studies, this study has some limitations that need considering when discussing its findings. First and foremost, our survey approach reflects the respondents' subjective perception of the questions investigated. Like every survey, subjective data has some inherent flaws that are difficult to eliminate. In other words, our data are collected over a single period, so there are certain limitations in the analysis and evaluation of its findings. A combination of cross-sectional and long-term studies needs to be studied in the future.

The intentional sampling method also has certain limitations and does not fully reflect the population's characteristics. Our survey was conducted in a Vietnamese cultural context. More general statements should be put forward by applying more development research models and results from other countries and cultures. This study has yet to examine demographic variables. To have more comprehensive information about health workers' public service motivation, further research needs to consider demographic factors such as ages, genders, occupations, and incomes.

COMPLIANCE WITH ETHICAL STANDARDS

Acknowledgments:

The authors would like to express their sincere thanks to the faculty community at Hanoi University of Home Affairs for supporting the survey.

Funding:

Not applicable.

Statement of human rights:

This article does not contain any studies with human participants performed by any authors.

Statement on the welfare of animals:

This article does not contain any studies with animals performed by any authors.

Informed consent:

Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study.

REFERENCES

1. Anderfuhren-Biget, S. 2012. "Profiles of Public Service-Motivated Civil Servants: Evidence from a Multicultural Country". *International Journal of Public Administration* 35 (1): 5- 18.
2. Brewer, G.A. and Walker, R.M. 2013. "Personnel Constraints in Public Organizations: The Impact of Rewards and Punishment on Organization Performance". *Public Administration Review* 73 (1):121-131.
3. Coursey, D.H., J.L. Perry, J.L. Brudney, and L. Littlepage. 2008. "Psychometric Verification of Perry's Public Service Motivation Instrument: Results for Volunteer Exemplars". *Review of Public Personnel Administration* 28(1): 79-90.
4. Dadashpoor, H., and Sheydayi, A. 2021. "Defining Public Interest in Planning: A Review". *Journal of Planning Literature* 36(4): 543–561. <https://doi.org/10.1177/08854122211018379>
5. Eldor, L., and Shoshani, A. 2016. "Caring relationships in school staff: Exploring the link between compassion and teacher work engagement". *Teaching and Teacher Education* 59, 126-136.
6. Francois, P. 2000. "Public service motivation as an argument for government provision". *Journal of Public Economics* 78(3):275-299.
7. George, A., Scott, K., Govender, V., and World Health Organization. 2017. "A health policy and systems research reader on human resources for health". World Health Organization.
8. Grant, A. M. 2008. "Employees without a cause: The motivational effects of prosocial impact in public service". *International Public Management Journal* 11 (1): 48-66.
9. Gustavo M Tavares, Filipe Sobral, Bradley E Wright. 2021. "Commitment to Public Values, Charismatic Leadership Attributions, and Employee Turnover in Street-Level Bureaucracies". *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 31(3): 542–560. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jopart/muua057>
10. Hair, J., Black, W., Babin, B., and Anderson, R. 2010. "Multivariate data analysis". (7th ed.). Prentice-Hall, Inc. Upper Saddle River, NJ, USA.
11. Heine, Florian and van, Witteloostuijn and Wang, Tse-Min. 2021. "Self-Sacrifice for the Common Good under Risk and Competition". *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*. doi: 10.1093/jopart/muab017
12. Huber, P., and Schubert, H. J. 2019. "Attitudes about work engagement of different generations - A cross-sectional study with nurses and supervisors". *Journal of nursing management* 27(7): 1341-1350.
13. Jang, C.-L. 2012. "The effect of personality traits on public service motivation: evidence from Taiwan. Social Behavior and Personality". *An International Journal* 40(5): 725-734.
14. Johri, R., Misra, R. K., and Bhattacharjee, S. 2016. "Work Passion: Construction of Reliable and Valid Measurement Scale in the Indian Context". *Global Business Review* 17(3): 147S-158S. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0972150916631206>
15. Jørgensen, T. B., and Bozeman, B. 2007. "Public Values: An Inventory". *Administration and Society* 39(3): 354–381. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0095399707300703>
16. Kim, S., and Vandenabeele, W. 2010. "A strategy for building public service motivation research internationally". *Public administration review* 70(5): 701-709.

17. Kim, Sangmook. 2009. Revising Perry's Measurement Scale of Public Service Motivation. *American Review of Public Administration - AMER REV PUBLIC ADM* 39: 149-163. 10.1177/0275074008317681.
18. Kline, R.B. 2011. "Principles and Practice of Structural Equation Modeling". New York: Guilford Press.
19. Nguyen, T.V., Bach, T.N., Le, T.Q. and Le, C.Q. 2017. "Local governance, corruption, and public service quality: evidence from a national survey in Vietnam". *International Journal of Public Sector Management* 30(2): 137-153. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJPSM-08-2016-0128>
20. Nurung, J and Rakhmat, and Asang, S and Djaing, Hamsinah. 2019. "Public service motivation and job satisfaction as driving the quality of public services in a disaster emergency". *IOP Conference Series: Earth and Environmental Science*. 235. 012060. 10.1088/1755-1315/235/1/012060.
21. O'Leary, C. 2019. "Public Service Motivation: A Rationalist Critique". *Public Personnel Management* 48(1): 82-96. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0091026018791962>
22. Perry, J. L., Honddeghem, A., and Wise, L. R. 2010. "Revisiting the motivational bases of public service: Twenty years of research and an agenda for the future". *Public Administration Review* 70(5): 681-690.
23. Perry, J.L. and Wise, L.R. 1990. "The motivational bases of public service". *Public Administration Review* 75(1): 53-78
24. Phong Thu. 2021. "White blouse soldiers on the frontline". available at: <https://vietnam.vnanet.vn/english/white-blouse-soldiers-on-the-frontline/490956.html>
25. Piatak, J. S., and Holt, S. B. 2020. "Prosocial behaviors: A matter of altruism or public service motivation?". *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 30(3): 504-518.
26. Ramos-Villagrasa, Pedro J. and Barrada, Juan Ramón and Río, Elena and Koopmans, Linda. 2019. "Assessing Job Performance Using Brief Self-report Scales: The Case of the Individual Work Performance Questionnaire". *Revista de Psicología del Trabajo y de las Organizaciones* 35: 195-205. 10.5093/jwop2019a21.
27. Rubel, M.R.B., Hung Kee, D.M. and Rimi, N.N. 2021. "High-performance work practices and medical professionals' work outcomes: the mediating effect of perceived organizational support". *Journal of Advances in Management Research* 18(3):368-391. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JAMR-05-2020-0076>
28. Snedecor, G.W., and Cochran, W.G. 1989. "Statistical Methods". 8th Edition. Ames: Iowa State University Press.
29. Tavares, Gustavo and Sobral, Filipe and Wright, Bradley. 2019. "Commitment to Public Values and Charismatic Leadership in Front-line Public Organizations". *Academy of Management Proceedings* 17396. 10.5465/AMBPP.2019.17396abstract.
30. Thu Hang Cao. 2020. "Corruption and the Building of a Developmental government in Vietnam today social and Philosophical-ethical consideration". *European Journal of Science and Theology* 16 (1):51-68.
31. Tummers, L. L., Bekkers, V., Vink, E., and Musheno, M. 2015. "Coping during public service delivery: A conceptualization and systematic review of the literature". *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 25(4):1099-1126.

32. Valdez, C. D., and Nichols, T. W. 2013. "Motivating healthcare workers to work during a crisis: A literature review". *Journal of Management Policy and Practice* 14(4): 43-51.
33. Vandenabeele, W. 2013. "Further integration of public service motivation theory and self-determination theory: concepts and antecedents". Paper presented at the International Public Service Motivation Conference, Utrecht.
34. Walker, R.M., Boyne, G.A., Brewer, G.A. and Avellaneda, C.N. 2011. "Market Orientation and Public Service Performance: New Public Management Gone Mad?". *Public Administration Review* 71(5):707-717.

Copyright © 2022 The author/s
This work is licensed under a CC-BY 3.0 license
(*) Corresponding author
Peer review method: Double-blind
Received: 30.03.2022
Accepted: 04.04.2022
Published: 14.06.2022
Original scientific article
DOI: <https://www.doi.org/10.47305/JLIA2282061a>

How to cite:


Ahmeti, Faruk, and Nazmi Zeqiri. 2022. "SWITCHING FROM CASH TO CASHLESS PAYMENTS: CONSUMER BEHAVIOR EVIDENCE FROM KOSOVO". *Journal of Liberty and International Affairs* 8 (2):61-74. <https://e-jlia.com/index.php/jlia/article/view/598>.



SWITCHING FROM CASH TO CASHLESS PAYMENTS: CONSUMER BEHAVIOR EVIDENCE FROM KOSOVO

Faruk Ahmeti¹, Nazmi Zeqiri^{2*}

¹University "Isa Boletini" - Mitrovica, Kosovo  <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3529-7919> ✉ faruk.ahmeti@umib.net

²University for Business and Technology, Kosovo  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5537-1982> ✉ nazmi.zeqiri@ubt-uni.net

Abstract: *This paper investigates the readiness of customers to shift toward cashless payment by identifying the main factors that impact that shift. The sample consisted of randomly selected individuals identified as potential users of cashless payment and are considered more likely to continue using the new technology. Five hundred eighty-six questionnaires were returned and considered complete for the research. The outcomes were assessed employing CFA for validity and determined using Cronbach's alpha for the reliability of the research, which was stratified by seven regions throughout the country was applied, by covering all levels of the society. The findings show that the perceived risk is connected to the level of correct and believable information offered to customers. It has been confirmed that the respondents trust cashless payment technology, and at the same time, self-efficacy had a lower impact on usage continuance intention. Consequently, the growth of self-efficacy would strengthen the intention to use cashless technologies. Several segments in the financial market may benefit from the results and develop more appropriate and reliable systems and the proper approach toward customers with needed information and insurance related to the security and benefits they may have by adopting the cashless technology.*

Keywords: *Cashless; Perceived Safety; Perceived Risk; Facilitating Conditions; Self-Efficacy; Developing Countries*

INTRODUCTION

Is cashless payment new, or has it become crucial in pandemics? Why are people changing so fast, as cashless payment was introduced long ago (Rahman *et al.* 2020)? Many ask what the future will look like regarding cashless payment and mobile and online payment usage, especially in developing countries. New technological development and improvement related to money transfers and payments are seen as a significant shift toward cashless payment (Świecka *et al.* 2021). However, as the developing countries have embraced and adopted online and cashless payment, the developing countries were struggling to convince their population of the adoption of new ways of payment (Ligon *et al.* 2019). Many indicators have triggered the use of cash-less payment technology. However, the most important is the latest issue with the Covid-19 pandemics and the action of many merchandisers by refusing physical contact and avoiding any social engagement with their customers. It was evident that the cash payment was not welcome, even in some cases not possible (Huterska *et al.* 2021).

Compared to e-banking, cashless was not so popular, especially within the emerging economies (Cwynar *et al.* 2021), due to many individuals being active in the grey economy and the level of incoming financial assistance from abroad mainly brought personally by migrants in the form of remittances. The money needed to be spent in cash as they were not transferred through any official systems, such as banks or other financial institutions.

This study primarily intends to examine the level of adoption and the use of cashless payment before the outbreak of Covid-19 and after, whereas the identification of factors that have impacted the consumer payment behavior shift toward the acceptance of new technology in Kosovo. Additionally, in the specific region set to be examined (Kosovo), the research tends to compare data with data related to customer payment habits in the region, which has the same history, cultural background, and economic development level (Kotkowski and Polasik 2021), by examining the range to which the specificities of certain states have resulted on behavioral payment patterns changes.

In this regard, the following hypothesis is developed, which will be tested:

H1: Perceived Safety positively impacts the intention to adopt cashless payment.

H2: Perceived Risk positively impacts the intention to adopt cashless payment.

H3: Facilitating Condition positively impacts the intention to adopt cashless payment.

H4: Self-efficacy positively impacts the intention to adopt cashless payment.

The study is organized as follows: introduction, literature review that incorporates information from the secondary sources and highlights developments that are evident during the given period, the data and discussions regarding the methodology used to collect the data; discussion of results and empirical data, and last section is the conclusion.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The cashless payment system is significantly affected and dependent on technological advances in individual means throughout its advance. Alswaigh and Aloud (2021) noted that the expedition of broader usage of cashless and creating a more adaptive society entails the attention of other factors, including local market potential and size, development of technological adoption, and income level payment infrastructure, legal infrastructure, and strategic government involvement.

Nowadays, technological development and new technologies are seen as new opportunities for many financial institutions and customers. Concerning this, the advancement of cashless transaction systems is shifting simultaneously with technical development (Dinh *et al.* 2018). Both users and offerors (companies) are continually seeking new ways of introducing new alternatives and promoting the adoption of cashless technologies. One of the major issues was the security of cashless payment systems and how that was precepted within the broader audience (clientele). As noted by Falco *et al.* (2021), more transparency of information regarding the introduced systems is required to increase the trust level, information which is related to privacy, account safety, technology, and any possibility to address any issues that customers may have (Dinh *et al.* 2018). As further noted by Dinh *et al.* (2018), the overall usage of technology has changed the level of adoption of online services, including online payment and

cashless payment systems. Despite this, the newly created reality with Covid-19 pandemics has shown that a more reliable and sustainable technologic system should be set and ready for customers (Zhao and Bacao 2021).

Different studies show that cashless technology was embraced differently in different regions and countries. More developed countries have shown a higher adoption and implementation than developing countries (Ligon *et al.* 2019). As the developed countries have already established the infrastructure (technological and legal aspects), developing countries are yet to be aware of many issues they may face, firstly the legal infrastructure and additional investment in money and time that may be difficult to reach. In this regard, Kosovo has only partially achieved push the cashless technology among its population. It is crucial to know consumer payment behavior. It is considered an essential element of the real economy, which would provide companies with other possibilities to be more efficient in developing and applying new appropriate and suitable payment systems (Zhang *et al.* 2019). Customer payment habits depend on many factors and changes surrounding the buying space, which tend to be incremental (Greene and Stavins 2020). However, newly imposed restrictions from different states in response to the Covid-19 pandemics have significantly affected customer payment behavior. This situation has resulted in an enormous increase in customers' implementation and adoption of cashless payment systems and methods (Greene and Stavins 2020).

As highlighted by different studies, many developed countries, despite the level of cashless payments already in place and as a norm for those countries, show an additional increase in cashless adoption (Alswaigh and Aloud 2021). Although the overall consumption level was (is) declined during the Covid-19 pandemic, it is evident that most payments have been made through or with cashless payments technology and online systems/tools. Different methods and tools were used in different countries and regions. In contrast, new mobile applications were developed and presented, although the traditional credit card is the most used cashless tool (Kotkowski and Polasik 2020). Whereas, in the developing countries, the issue of the shift toward cashless payments needed yet to be developed, as there was and still is a relatively undeveloped system in place, a lack of legal infrastructure, and most importantly, the lack of customer awareness and information regarding the safety of cashless.

Difficulties that challenge developing countries (including the region assessed, Kosovo) predominantly are related to banking services and robust government legal infrastructure regarding income transactions and cash availability (Yang *et al.* 2021). Developing countries are characterized by a high level of cash available in the market due to a high level of grey market and remittances that are delivered through non-institutional channels, unfamiliarized with new internet and mobile applications and electronic payment possibilities, and lack of trust in the overall payment system, etc. (Yang *et al.* 2021). However, there is a change seen in Kosovo's market regarding the cashless payment adoption, where the immediate impact comes from the investment in new technology from diverse economic entities, if example, the usage of credit cards, mobile applications, online payment, which resulted in many developing countries due to the changes imposed by the pandemics and consequences in that regard (Yang *et al.* 2021). At the current time, the globe is facing the Covid-19 pandemics, which has pushed many stakeholders to undergo a substantial transformation and are still trying to develop the best possible solutions, in specific the implementation of new technological infrastructure, which

would support maintaining a rather stable economic situation (He *et al.* 2021). Changes resulting due to the Covid-19 pandemics are critical to tracking the landscape of new guiding principles and measures, particularly when it comes to the cases of imposed regulations regarding the social and physical distance and restrictions that have been imposed (Dwivedi *et al.* 2020). Concerning the new technology and systems required in pandemic situations (due to new limitations imposed), it is clear that crises have increased the pressure on all parties to find solutions and accordingly switch to a new cashless system (Ahmed and Sur 2021). This is consistent with claims made decades ahead, as stated by Friedman (1999), who claims that the development of IT would have implications on payment habits and that cash payment will lose its importance. In this regard, the study applies the concept of rational action as the concept and evaluation variable by suggesting that trust affects the customer's attitudes, which subsequently influences behavioral intents in new standard habits.

As noted by Coppola *et al.* (2021), perceived security and safety seem to be a crucial element in substituting the intent into the necessity to use something, which in turn results in trust or untrust of customers to use or adopt any other form besides the one that is used or has already gain their trust. Additionally, to foresee and enlighten perceived security, the outcomes of the inter-subject research disclosed that perceived security might be augmented. This logic of security regarding the payment can be defined mainly due to the lack of experience and the lack of proper information that would support the intention of customers to change their habits and adopt (use) the cashless payment methods (technologies).

Besides the security, studies have revealed that self-efficacy, together with easy-to-use tools developed for mobile phones (in recent years) dedicated to cashless payments, are considered crucial elements that impacted the shift and supported the level of adoption of cashless systems (Wang 2020). To best highlight the strong point of the relationship consequence among hypotheses, the standard Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) analysis solution is applied, as shown in Figure 1.

METHODOLOGY

Questionnaires were developed and distributed to respondents for hypothesis testing in two forms, online (via email), and also some of them were distributed in physical form. A validated scale from the literature was incorporated in the questionnaires, which have also considered the current context of the overall situation created due to issues with pandemics. The questionnaire consists of two main parts: the respondents' socio-demographic characteristics and their intention for behavior shift or change toward cashless payment method adoption. The outcomes were assessed employing confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) for validity and determined using Cronbach's alpha for the reliability of the research instrument through STATA. The validity was tested to ensure the questions could be used to measure a concept precisely and correctly. With high validity are believed to have the ability to explain the research problem according to actual circumstances or events.

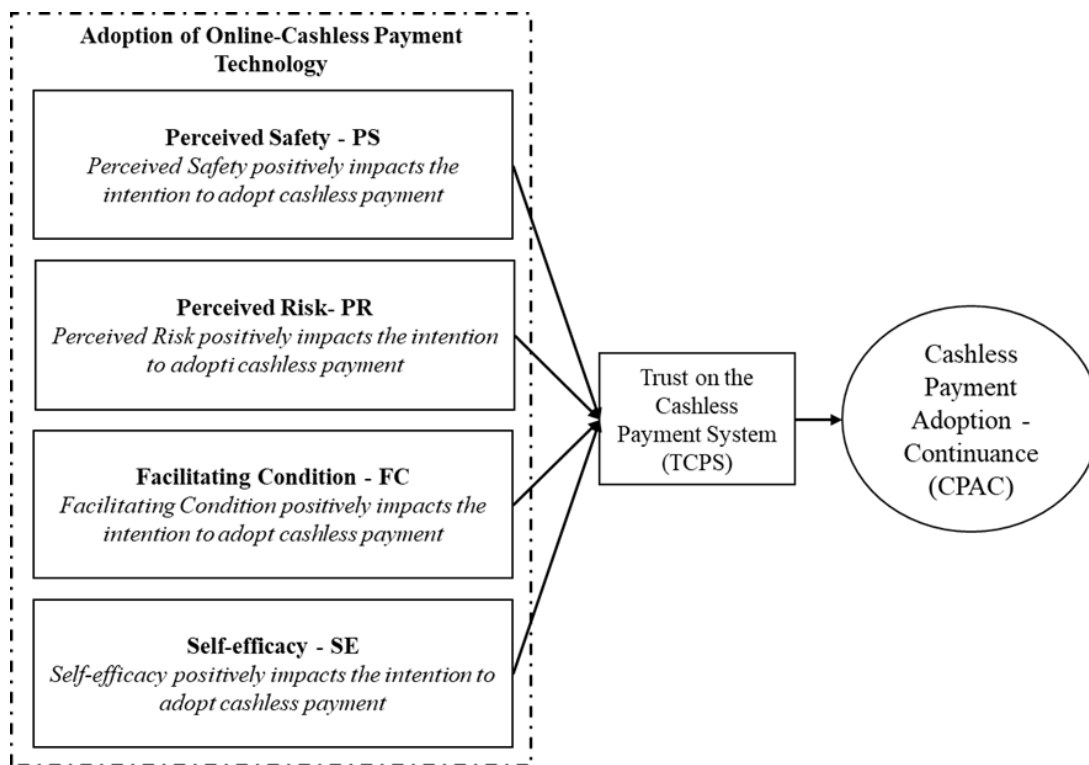


Figure 1: Research Framework (Source: Authors' depiction)

The sample of this research is randomly selected and comprises all levels of specimens that provide more comprehensive results as it gathers information from different society members. The sample consists of individuals who are more likely to use the cashless payment method and can provide a comprehensive evaluation compared to the pre-pandemic situation. For this study, there were 650 questionnaires sent and from which 586 were returned and are considered completed and usable, and their characteristics were quite heterogeneous. Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of respondents.

RESULTS

The standard SEM analysis solution in Figure 1 presents the research framework used in this study and exhibits the relationship between strength and effect among constructs. After testing the FIT model, it has been revealed that 2 of the criteria met the requirements according to the model implemented to test the hypothesis. Root means the square error of approximation (RMSEA), namely reached a value of 0.063 (cut-off value ≤ 0.08), which is an acceptable and reliable outcome. The second testing criteria that met the requirements is GFI with a satisfactory fit of 0.921 (cut-off value ≥ 0.90) (Xia and Yang 2019).

The demographic information of respondents that participated in this research is presented in Table 1. Seemingly, most questionnaires returned were from male respondents (54.8%), even if it was attempted that the distribution of questionnaires to be equally among males and females. The predominant age of respondents was 18-24 years old (29.90%), while

25-34 years old represented 24.9%, and 35-44 years old represented 21.7% of respondents. These groups represent the majority as they are considered the generation with better technical knowledge and are more open to new technologies. As shown in Table 1, most of the respondents are bachelor's degree holders (46.80%), whereas 28.20% of respondents were high school graduates who were either continuing at BSc or were already engaged in their profession. However, a minority of respondents had Ph.D. degrees (1.90%), yet their opinion is considered necessary due to their knowledge of the topic treated in this study.

Table1: Demographic Data of Respondents (Source: Authors' depiction 2021)

Demographics	Categories	Frequency	%
Gender	Male	321	54.8%
	Female	265	45.2%
Education	PhD	11	1.9%
	MSc	86	14.7%
	BSc	274	46.8%
	Profession	46	7.8%
	High School	169	28.8%
Age	18-24 years old	175	29.9%
	25-34 years old	146	24.9%
	35-44 years old	127	21.7%
	45-54 years old	96	16.4%
	>55 years old	42	7.2%
Profession	GOV sector	51	8.7%
	Unemployed	42	7.2%
	Education sector	57	9.7%
	Entrepreneur	31	5.3%
	Employee	73	12.5%
	Student	284	48.5%
	Others	48	8.2%
Total		586	100.0%

Whereas regarding the employment status, the majority with 48.50% of respondents are students, employees from the Government sector represent 8.7%, unemployed is around 7.2%, employees engaged in the educational sector at all levels represent 9.7%, self-employed and/or company owners (entrepreneurs) represent 5.3%, respondents that have only marked that they are employed represent around 12.5%, and others that have not given any status regarding their employment represent 8.2% of respondents. In this regard, the validity and reliability measurements were summarized in Table 2.

Table 2: Confirmatory Factor Analysis Statistics (Source: Authors' depiction 2021)

Indicators	FL	CR	AVE
A. Perceived Safety (Coppola <i>et al.</i> 2021)			
1. <i>Cashless is safer.</i>	.789	.817	.691
2. <i>Cashless payment is the future.</i>	.719		
B. Perceived Risk (Falco <i>et al.</i> 2021)			
1. <i>The risk of cashless payment is higher regarding the transfers.</i>	.807	.966	.902
2. <i>Cashless may offer others access to my private information.</i>	.773		
3. <i>There is a lack of information regarding cashless payments.</i>	.670		
C. Facilitating condition (Yang <i>et al.</i> 2021)			
1. <i>I possess the essential requirements to use cashless payment.</i>	.919	.821	.644
2. <i>I possess the needed knowledge to use cashless technology.</i>	.882		
3. <i>I am familiar with the technology needed.</i>	.821		
D. Self-efficacy (Wang 2020)			
1. <i>I need assistance when using cashless technology.</i>	.637	.840	.529
2. <i>I prefer to ask for assistance only from trusted individuals when needed.</i>	.624		
3. <i>I can learn if demonstrated form others.</i>	.671		
E. Trust in the online payment (Sampet <i>et al.</i> 2017)			
1. <i>I have confidence in a forthcoming switch to cashless payment.</i>	.670	.799	.569
2. <i>I have confidence in the privacy of my information.</i>	.690		
3. <i>The social distancing is achieved through cashless technology.</i>	.439		
F. Usage continuance intention (Setyanto and Sunarjo 2021)			
1. <i>I plan to carry on with cashless payments in the future.</i>	.862	.839	.655
2. <i>Main reasons to adopt future cashless payments are security and reliability.</i>	.847		
3. <i>If possible, I would use cashless payment in all cases due to the lower risk for containment of Covid-19.</i>	.681		

Construct Reliability: $\geq 0,70$

Variance Extract: $\geq 0,50$

Alpha Coefficient (Variable alpha): $\geq 0,60$

To test the validity of the data, a Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was conducted. The results have confirmed that the measurement model showed satisfactory criteria, as they all loaded variable values above ≥ 0.5 , which confirms that selected variables for testing the hypothesis are considered valid. Regarding the reliability value results, it has been confirmed that all observed variables are valid, as the CRV was ≥ 0.70 and the EV was higher than the minimum set of 0.50. AVE for the respective variable was higher than 0.50, and the LF value was also ≥ 0.5 . Whereas the significance was at the 5% level, the outcomes remained in line with the reliability of the indicator level.

As per the results shown in Table 2, hypothesis testing was conducted, and the elaborative description of those results shows their confirmation or rejection. H1 stated that there is a positive relationship between Perceived Safety and the adoption of cashless payment

in the region that was analyzed. Hence, PS has a positive effect on trust in cashless technology and its adoption, which confirms that the more secure the customers feel when using cashless payment technology, the higher is the trust level and the possibility of adopting the cashless payment technology, which is also in accordance with claims made by Coppola *et al.* (2021).

The H2 claimed a positive relationship between privacy level and the adoption of cashless payment. The results show that Perceived Risk (PR) had no significant effect on trust in cashless adoption, meaning that as the consumer doubt the security of using cashless payment, the lower the trust in cashless technology usage and adoption, which is also supported by studies made by Falco *et al.* (2021).

H3: Facilitating Circumstances (FC) - There is a positive relationship between Facilitating Circumstances that offer cashless payment and the adoption of cashless payment. FC had a substantial and positive effect on customers' trust in cashless usage. Hence, the higher the customers see facilitating conditions provided by the cashless technology, the higher consumer trust in those technologies, and the level of acceptance seems to be higher too and is in accordance with Yang *et al.* (2021).

H4: Self-efficacy (SE) - There is a positive relationship between Self-efficacy and the adoption of cashless payment. SE had a positive and significant effect on trust in cashless technology, so increasing SE would directly increase the belief in cashless and online technology that is offered to customers, which is in harmony with claims made by Wang (2020)

DISCUSSION

This study aimed to identify the changing payment habits of customers regarding cashless payment and how the customers see cashless payment for the future as an opportunity or rather as a threat or uncertainty. The study applied empirical testing methods to identify and measure the reasons (variables) that may support customers changing their payment habits and adopting cashless payment or rejecting it. Compared to the developed country that has already developed their cashless payment systems, developing countries are yet struggling to implement new technologies, develop new payment system, adopt legislation, and increase the acceptance level of their inhabitants, which is due to the lack of the correct information regarding the cashless payment safety. Many reasons have been identified, but the main would be the lack of financial investments and many grey zones on legalizing financial transactions. As a result, cash payment is the dominant payment option. The main result of this study was the identification of factors affecting the cashless payment adoption in the future or the level of contumacy intent of cashless payment systems and technologies within developing countries, with a specific focus on Kosovo, by addressing the current issue of whether the cashless payments will be used at this level in an after-pandemic era, which is still to be determined if this was a temporary situation or the new operativity will be embraced regardless the situation with pandemics.

Although the factors that impact the cashless payment habit of customers in the future are tested and elaborated, the results require additional scientific implications for future research and tangible implications for both cashless payment customers on one side and the offers of those technologies on the other side. The following results are generated based on the

research. Perceived safety has positively affected trust in cashless payment by confirming that the higher the security level is sensed, the higher the level of adoption of cashless payment. Facilitating conditions positively affected the customers' trust in cashless technology and its adoption. Hence, the higher the confidence in facilitating benefits, the customers' trust will increase. Also, self-efficacy has positively affected the trust level. Increasing self-efficacy would also increase consumer trust in cashless payments and technology.

A general result that may give an overall idea of the future cashless payment adoption is the level of trust in cashless payment technology and systems, which shows to positively impact the usage continuance intention, which is in accordance with Setyanto and Sunarjo (2021). It has been confirmed that the respondents (customers) from the given region in this research (Kosovo) trust cashless payment technology, and the entire process increases the future usage of cashless payments. At the same time, self-efficacy had a lower impact on usage continuance intention. Consequently, the growth of self-efficiency would strengthen the intention to use cashless technologies, which is also in line with claims made by Wang (2020) in his research study.

The hypothesis can be considered representative of several countries in the region of the Balkans, which have similar economic development, cultural background, political issues, and overall characteristics within those countries. However, the sample size may be considered small to generalize customer behavior regarding the adoption of cashless payments. A more significant number of respondents ought to be included to create a more comprehensive result. The study, which would also include more rural regions and diverse profiles of respondents, includes professionals that are offering the services.

The survey was done in rather un-normal circumstances due to the Covid-19 situation; hence, the respondents may have reacted and provided answers on the effect of perceived safety related to pandemics. It would also be helpful to gather data from other perspectives, which may be related to emotional and cultural background factors that can only be conducted after the end of the pandemic (Zhang *et al.* 2018). Another factor that may have affected the respondent's reaction to the questionnaires is the lack of proper information, directly affecting trust in new technology adoption (Singh and Srivastava 2020). Developing countries are also struggling with providing proper banking infrastructure. Integrating peripheral variables related to value co-creation should be the following field of research, which would add valuable information to the issue treated in this study (Mostafa 2020). However, it remains to see and measure the level of adoption only after the pandemic issue is gone or when it is realized that this situation is a new reality; hence, Covid-19 will be part of the future.

CONCLUSION

This study assessed the level of acceptance and the intention of continuity of usage of cashless payment. Several indicators have been identified and applied to the study and tested through quantitative methodology with a specific focus on the Kosovo region. One of the primary intentions of this study was to assess customers' readiness to use a cashless payment method, which corresponds with the pandemic situation, and if the cashless usage could be sustainable in the post-Covid-19 era as 'a new normal'. Many individuals in developing countries

are active in the grey sector. The extensive support from the diaspora through remittance deliveries also increases the level of cash outside the legal financial system. Hence, many customers were struggling and hesitated to embrace cashless technology for payments as they would be forced to deposit their money in the bank and report their income source. In other words, cashless seems to be something new compared to developing countries where this technology was adopted earlier (Grzelczak and Pastusiak 2020).

As Covid-19 closed the entire globe, customer awareness increased by pushing countries to implement lockdown and strict distancing measures. The perceived risk is seen as a fundament toward changes and adoptions, including the adoption of cashless payment. As such, by identifying new possible benefits that cashless payment offers, the cashless will further face a continuance increase in usage level. Besides other more general benefits, cashless and internet-based payments are cost-efficient, more time-efficient, and relatively safe (Falco *et al.* 2021), mainly as they provide higher health security. Several hypotheses were developed based on the identified variables (factors) and consequently tested to complete the study's objectives. A total of 650 questionnaires were sent, and received 586 completed and considered to provide sufficient information from different customer profiles in the Kosovo region.

There are several fields that the research can contribute to and provide valuable information, both in theory and practice, by showing that perceived risk is an essential element that impacts customer behavior toward the adoption of cashless payment technology. Another element that can be beneficial for many service providers in the field of cashless is that trust in new technologies can be developed by offering accurate information regarding safety and the facilitating condition. The more customers comprehend the perceived ease of using cashless technology, the more likely they are to continue using it in the future, and the more manageable and higher the level of its acceptance.

COMPLIANCE WITH ETHICAL STANDARDS

Acknowledgments:

Not applicable.

Funding:

Not applicable.

Statement of human rights:

This article does not contain any studies with human participants performed by any authors.

Statement on the welfare of animals:

This article does not contain any studies with animals performed by any authors.

Informed consent:

Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study.

REFERENCES

1. Ahmed, Shafique, and Sur, Samiran. 2021. "Change in the uses pattern of digital banking services by Indian rural MSMEs during demonetization and Covid-19 pandemic-related restrictions". *Vilakshan – XIMB Journal of Management* ahead-of-print. <https://doi.org/10.1108/XJM-09-2020-0138>
2. Alswaigh, Noha Y., and Aloud, Monira E. 2021. "Factors Affecting User Adoption of E-Payment Services Available in a mobile Wallets in Saudi Arabia". *International Journal of Computer Science and Network Security* 21 (6):222-230. <https://doi.org/10.22937/IJCSNS.2021.21.6.29>
3. Coppola, Pierluigi, Dell'Olio, Luigi, and Silvestri, Fulvio. 2021. "Random-Parameters Behavioral Models to Investigate Determinants of Perceived Safety in Railway Stations." *Journal of Advanced Transportation* 2021:1-11. <https://doi.org/10.1155/2021/5530591>
4. Cwynar, Andrzej, Świecka, Berta, Filipek, Kamil, and Porzak, Robert. 2021. "Consumers' knowledge of cashless payments: Development, validation, and usability of a measurement scale". *Journal of Consumer Affairs* 1-26. <https://doi.org/10.1111/joca.12424>
5. Dinh, Van Son, Nguyen, Hoang Viet, and Nguyen, The Ninh. 2018. "Cash or Cashless?. Promoting Consumers' Adoption of Mobile Payments in An Emerging Economy". *Strategic Direction* 55 (1):1- 4. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijinfomgt.2020.102211>
6. Dwivedi, Yogesh K., Hughes, D. Laurie, Coombs, Crispin, Constantinou, Ioanna, Duan, Yanqing, Edwards, S. John, Gupta, Babita, Lal, Banita, Misra, Santosh, Prashant, Prakhara, and Raman, Ramakrishnan. 2020. "Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on Information Management Research and Practice: Transforming Education, Work, and Life". *International Journal of Information Management* 55 (102211):1-39. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijinfomgt.2020.102211>
7. Falco, Alessandra, Girardi, Damiano, Dal Corso, Laura, Yıldırım, Murat, and Converso, Daniela. 2021. "The perceived risk of being infected at work: An application of the job demands-resources model to workplace safety during the COVID-19 outbreak". *PLoS ONE* 16 (9):e0257197. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0257197>
8. Friedman, M. Benjamin. 1999. "The Future of Monetary Policy: The Central Bank as An Army With Only A Signal Corps?" *International Finance* 2 (3):321-338. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-2362.00032>
9. Greene, Claire, and Stavins, Joanna. 2020. "Diary of Consumer Payment Choice". *Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta Research Data Reports* 20 (4):1-18. <http://dx.doi.org/10.29338/rdr2020-04>
10. Grzelczak, Marlena, and Pastusiak, Radosław. 2020. "Cashless Payments and Economic Growth in Selected European Countries". *Annales Universitatis Mariae Curie-Skłodowska, sectio H-Oeconomia* 54 (3):33-46. <http://dx.doi.org/10.17951/h.2020.54.3.33-46>
11. He, Wu, Zhang, J. Zuopeng, and Li, Wenzhuo. 2021. "Information technology solutions, challenges, and suggestions for tackling the COVID-19 pandemic". *International Journal*

of Information Management 57 (102287):1-8.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijinfomgt.2020.102287>

12. Huterska, Agnieszka, Piotrowska, Anna, and Szalacha-Jarmużek, Joanna. 2021. "Fear of the COVID-19 Pandemic and Social Distancing as Factors Determining the Change in Consumer Payment Behavior at Retail and Service Outlets". *Energies* 14 (14):1-18. <https://doi.org/10.3390/en14144191>
13. Kotkowski, Radosław, and Polasik, Michał. 2021. "COVID-19 pandemic increases the divide between cash and cashless payment users in Europe". *Economics Letters* 209:1-6, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.econlet.2021.110139>
14. Ligon, Ethan, Malick, Badal, Sheth, Ketki, and Trachtman, Carl. 2019. "What explains low adoption of digital payment technologies? Evidence from small-scale merchants in Jaipur". *India. PLoS ONE* 14 (7):e0219450. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0219450>.
15. Mostafa, B. Rania. 2020. "Mobile banking service quality: a new avenue for customer value co-creation". *International Journal of Bank Marketing* 38 (5):1107–1132, <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJBM-11-2019-0421>
16. Rahman, Mahfuzur, Ismail, Izlin, and Bahri, Shamshul. 2020. "Analysing consumer adoption of cashless payment in Malaysia". *Digital Business* 1 (1):1-11. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.digbus.2021.100004>
17. Sampet, Jomjai, Changchit, Chuleeporn, and Lonkani, Ravi. 2020. "A Comparative Study of Mobile Banking Adoption: An Analysis of Banking Customers in U.S. and Thailand. 109-153, <https://doi.org/10.4018/978-1-7998-1786-4.ch005>
18. Setyanto, Refius Pradipta, and Sunarjo, Wenti Ayu. 2021. "Will cashless payment become consumer's transaction habit in the "new normal" era?" *Trikonomika* 20 (1):47-53. <https://doi.org/10.23969/trikonmika.v20i1.3418>
19. Singh, Sindhu, and Srivastava, R. K. 2020. "Understanding the intention to use mobile banking by existing online banking customers: an empirical study". *Journal of Financial Services Marketing* 25:86–96, <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41264-020-00074-w>
20. Świecka, Beata, Terefenko, Paweł, and Paprotny, Dominik. 2021. "Transaction factors' influence on the choice of payment by Polish consumers". *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services* 58:1-13. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2020.102264>
21. Wang, Shih-Tse. 2020. "The Effects of Risk Appraisal and Coping Appraisal on The Adoption Intention of M-Payment". *International Journal of Bank Marketing* 38 (1):21–33. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJBM-10-2018-0272>
22. Xia, Yan, and Yang, Yanyun. 2019. "RMSEA, CFI, and TLI in structural equation modeling with ordered categorical data: The story they tell depends on the estimation methods". *Behavior Research Methods* 51:409–428. <https://doi.org/10.3758/s13428-018-1055-2>
23. Yang, Marvello, Mamun, Abdullah, Mohiuddin, Muhammad, Nawi, C. Noorshella, and Zainol, Noor. 2021. "Cashless Transactions: A Study on Intention and Adoption of e-Wallets". *Sustainability* 13 (2):1-18. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su13020831>
24. Zhang, Tingting, Lu, Can, and Kizildag, Murat. 2018. "Banking "on-the-go": examining customers' adoption of mobile banking services". *International Journal of Quality and Service Sciences* 10 (3):279–295. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJQSS-07-2017-0067>

25. Zhang, Yanying, Zhang, Gaiyan, Liu, Liuling, De Renzis, Tania De, and Schmiedel, Heiko. 2019. "Retail payments and the real economy". *Journal Financial Stability* 44 ©:100690. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jfs.2019.100690>
26. Zhao, Yuyang, and Bacao, Fernando. 2021. "How Does the Pandemic Facilitate Mobile Payment? An Investigation on Users' Perspective under the COVID-19 Pandemic". *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 18 (3):1016. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph18031016>.

Copyright © 2022 The author/s
This work is licensed under a CC-BY 3.0 license
(*) Corresponding author
Peer review method: Double-blind
Received: 07.03.2022
Accepted: 23.03.2022
Published: 14.06.2022
Original scientific article
DOI: <https://www.doi.org/10.47305/JLIA2282075k>

How to cite:

Kume, Andon. 2022. "ANALYSIS OF THE INTEGRITY INDEX FOR PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS IN THE ALBANIAN DEVELOPING REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY". *Journal of Liberty and International Affairs* 8 (2):75-86. <https://e-jlia.com/index.php/jlia/article/view/599>.



ANALYSIS OF THE INTEGRITY INDEX FOR PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS IN THE ALBANIAN DEVELOPING REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY

Andon Kume^{1*}

¹Aleksandër Moisiu University of Durrës, Albania  <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0669-7753> ✉ andon.kume@gmail.com

Abstract: *This research aimed to analyze the Albanian parliamentary elections held in 2013, 2017, and 2021 in order to evaluate the process of development of representative democracy in Albania, one of the post-communist countries of the Western Balkans. The analysis was based on assessing the dynamics of the Electoral Integrity Index (PEI) as a quantitative indicator that reflects the level of fulfillment of international standards for democratic elections. The PEI was evaluated using the average perception values for 11 indicators reflecting the election process. Based on the value of the PEI2013 (54.1 scores), PEI2017 (53.3 scores), and PEI2021 (57.7 scores), the parliamentary elections in Albania were considered as processes that do not exceed the 'moderate' level. The non-significant difference between 2013, 2017, and 2021 PEI ($p > 0.05$) demonstrated low progress in developing democratic performances in Albanian society.*

Keywords: *Integrity; Parliamentary Election; Democracy; Albania*

INTRODUCTION

Elections are essential for exercising fundamental human rights and civil and political rights. According to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 21, an electoral process is democratic only if:

- it is realized as fair competition,
- takes place in an environment characterized by reliability, transparency, and accountability,
- manages to provide equal competition conditions to all subjects involved in it,
- citizens are informed, without distinction, about their rights and duties as voters, about the rules they must respect in the voting process, and the alternatives, programs, and candidate competition,
- legal framework and its implementation enable the respect and fulfillment of the right to free expression, free media, freedom of association, freedom to form political parties,

political cooperation, free movement, respect for the principles of the rule of law, equal right to run for public office, non-discrimination and equal rights for all citizens.

Conducting elections under the above principles is one of the main challenges faced by societies in the Western Balkans, which, after the changes of systems of government that occurred in the early 90s, are going through the processes of democratic development. In order to evaluate the electoral process regarding the level of fulfillment of the standards for elections to be considered free, fair, and democratic, OSCE participating States have agreed to use as a reference the assessments given in the final election report prepared by OSCE/ODIHR International Observer Mission. Meanwhile, in addition to these assessments and with them, OSCE/ODIHR (2003) recommends considering evaluations provided by civil society and independent domestic observers.

Evaluating the level of fulfillment of democratic standards in elections and assessing the dynamics and trend of changes from one electoral process to another creates the opportunity to judge the quality of the development process of representative democracy and its functioning. In particular, this process is vital for countries that are still on the democratic development road path (Marginean 1997; ACE Encyclopaedia 2013; Norris *et al.* 2013; Thomassen 2014; Finn 2019).

To evaluate the fulfillment of democratic standards in elections, during the pre-election period, campaign, election day, after the election, and the final result, Norris *et al.* (2014) proposed the assessment of Perceptions for the Election Integrity Index (PEI).

Norris *et al.* (2014) emphasize that “elections meeting international standards are essential to liberal democracy, although they are only one institution”. Meanwhile, according to Liz and Stephan (1996), the “electoral list fallacy” assumes that elections are necessary and sufficient for democracy to flourish. Norris *et al.* (2014) emphasize that “patterns of electoral integrity are being strongly correlated with contemporary levels of liberal democracy, monitored by the Freedom House”.

The Index that assesses the Perception of Election Integrity (PEI) for the parliamentary elections held in Albania in PEI₂₀₁₃ and PEI₂₀₁₇ was evaluated by Norris *et al.* in the framework of the Electoral Integrity Project (2019), in which the 337 elections held in 166 countries around the world. The Perception of Electoral Integrity Index (PEI₂₀₂₁) for parliamentary elections in 2021 was evaluated by an Albanian NGO (AIESD 2021). Through the analysis of PEI and based on the evaluation of their dynamics, this paper is intended to judge the development of representative democracy in Albania as a post-communist country in the Western Balkans.

METHODOLOGY

The evaluation of PEI was carried out by applying, in the main lines, the rules described by the methodology developed by Norris *et al.* (2014).

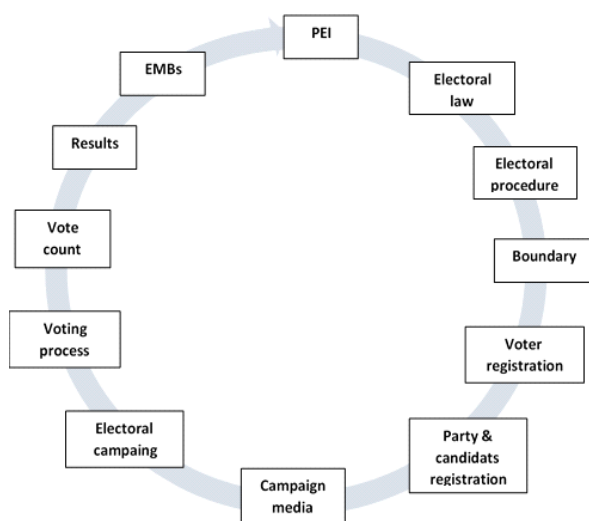


Figure 1: PEI Electoral Process (Source: Electoral Integrity Project. 2014. The Expert Survey of Perceptions of Electoral Integrity, Release 2.5 (PEI-2.5))

According to this Methodology, the Index for the PEI is performed using the quantitative evaluation of perceptions for 49 indicators, grouped into 11 categories that reflect the entire election cycle (Figure 1). Norris *et al.* (2014) emphasize that the values of 49 items are quantitative assessments of the perceptions done by experts committed to this purpose. Each item is formulated as an assertion that the attitude toward positive growth should be expressed, ranging from the lowest value (1) to the highest (5). For the evaluation of the Index of Perceptions of Election Integrity (PEI), the values of the indicators (average of the values of all the constituent items of the respective indicator) are standardized in values from 1 to 100 points. Standardized values are ranked in five intervals (Table 1).

Table 1: PEI Index (Source: Norris, Frank, and Martinez i Coma 2014)

≤ 40 scores	Very low
40 ⁺ - 50 scores	Low
50 ⁺ - 60 scores	Moderate
60 ⁺ - 70 scores	High
≥70 ⁺ scores	Very high

For evaluating PEI Index for the Parliament of Albania (2021), based on the above Methodology, AIESD (Albanian Institute of Election System Development) has activated ten experts with training in legal and political sciences. Considering features, characteristics, and

problems of the electoral process in Albania, experts collected data related to perceptions for 11 indicators (Table 2).

Table 2: Indicators and Number of Items (Source: Authors' depiction)

Phases	Indicator	Number of items
Pre-Election Day	Legislation	12
	Electoral procedure	15
	Boundary	5
	Voter registration	7
	Parties and candidate's registration	17
Campaign	Media and campaign	18
	Electoral campaign	17
Election Day	Voting process	17
Post-Election Day	Counting	12
	Result	8
	Electoral body	19

These indicators concern, among others, the following topics:

- problems related to the process of drafting legislation;
- registration of candidates and their legal obligation for self-declaration in the implementation of the decriminalization law;
- campaign and its financing;
- gender representation;
- administration of the electoral process.

The items were formulated considering the methodology used by the Albanian nonpolitical domestic observers that monitored the parliamentary elections held on 25 April 2021. In this way, the PEI assessment also used the data published by these local observers.

RESULTS

The values of 11 indicators estimated for the last three Albanian parliamentary elections are presented in Figure 2.

Legislation

The indicator that reflects the process of preparing the legal framework and the qualities of the Electoral Code following the elections for the Albanian Parliament that took place during the 2013-2021 period is estimated at a moderate level. For the 2017 elections, the perception of this indicator is at a low level. These perceptions are the consequence of the fact that, despite the repeated recommendations of OSCE/ODIHR international observers and the Albanian civil

society, the Albanian political parties did not reach an agreement to make amendments to the electoral legislation. The electoral reform in this period failed.

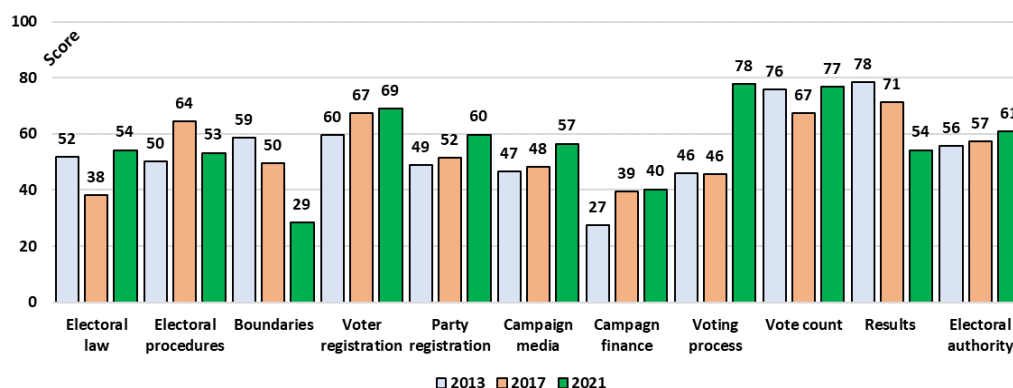


Figure 2: Assessment of Perceptions for 11 Indicators Parliamentary Elections 2013, 2017, 2021
(Source: Harvard Dataverse and authors' depiction)

Before the 2021 parliamentary elections, significant changes were made in the Electoral Code and in the legislation that addresses issues related to elections, such as the Criminal Code. However, the indicator that assesses perceptions of electoral legislation did not increase significantly. This is because the majority, without the opposition's approval, amended the Albanian Constitution and the Electoral Code. These amendments were not in the electoral interest of the opposition parties.

Implementation of Electoral Procedures

Perceptions with high positive values for implementing electoral procedures by election administration belong to the 2017 parliamentary elections. According to these perceptions, this election is classified at a high level, referring to this indicator. In the 2021 parliamentary elections, the value of the electoral procedures indicator decreases by about 17.2 percentage points. This result shows that the changes made in relation to CEC did not meet the expectations. The two collegial structures of the CEC, the Regulatory Commission and the Complaints and Sanctions Commission, were perceived as bodies that, in many cases, made decisions following the interests of political parties that had appointed the members of these commissions (KRIIK 2021¹)

¹ The behavior of the CSC and of the Regulatory was found to be politically influenced, which was clearly seen in the views expressed by the members of these commissions regarding issues whereof the position of political parties was divided.

Boundaries

Code of Good Practices on Electoral Issues - Venice Commission emphasizes that the boundaries of electoral zones and their geographic location in the territory are important for the election's quality (Venice Commission 2002).

The division of constituencies has been the same in all three parliamentary elections. However, perceptions of their negative effect on election integrity have steadily increased. The results of the 2013 parliamentary elections showed that this electoral map had adverse effects on the race between political parties. The division of Albania into 12 constituencies and the implementation of the D'Hondt method for allocating seats in the parliament favored the big parties. This division of constituencies has generated unfavorable conditions for competition for small parties or new political parties. Boundaries negatively affect the principle of proportionality between votes and mandates won by electoral subjects. The result of the parliamentary elections in 2013 influenced the increase of perceptions about the negative effect of the boundaries on the integrity of the elections. For the 2019 parliamentary elections, the perception of the 'Boundaries' indicator decreased by about 15.2 percentage points. The establishment in the Constitution of a national electoral threshold, accompanied by the unchanged electoral map, are factors that significantly influenced the perception of the negative effect of boundaries on the integrity of the parliamentary elections in 2021. The boundaries indicator for these elections was evaluated at a very low level.

Voter Registration

According to the amendments approved by law no. 10019 (29.12.2008) Electoral Code of the Republic of Albania, the voter list is defined as a document that the National Register for Albanian Citizens should generate. Albanian electoral legislation positions the registration in the voter list as a necessary condition for exercising the right to vote. Recommendations for improving the quality of this list are given in all Final Reports of OSCE/ODIHR International Missions that have observed the parliamentary and local elections during the 2000-2021 period. The Albanian government has been constantly committed to improving the voter list for its implementation. This is also reflected in the perceptions of the respective indicator. A positive upward trend characterizes its values. In the 2021 parliamentary elections, this indicator is valued at a high level. This is because currently, the voters' list is compiled based on legislation that meets the standards of international documents and approximates the legislation of EU countries.

Parties and Candidates Registration

During the 2013-2021 period, the Albanian electoral legislation has continuously improved in the provisions related to the registration of political parties and candidates. This is also reflected in the increase of the positive values of the respective indicator. For the 2021 parliamentary elections, this indicator is estimated at 22.4 percentage points more than the 2013 parliamentary elections and is positioned at a high level. This means that the universal political

right to be elected in Albania is implemented following international standards, because of the legislation and the goodwill of political parties and the election administration.

Media and Electoral Campaigns

The role of the media in the electoral process and the coverage of the electoral campaigns are perceived as indicators with the non-positive effects on the election integrity index in Albania. During 2013-2017, no changes were made in the Albanian legislation to improve this situation. Significant amendments were made only in 2020, on the eve of the parliamentary elections on 25 April 2021. These amendments affected the perception of the indicator 'Media and electoral campaigns', changing its level from low to moderate.

Financing and Election Campaign

Election campaign financing, transparency of funding sources, use of public funds in the election campaign, voter intimidation, use of dirty money for vote-buying, and real reporting of election campaign financing by political entities are the most practical problems that negatively affect the integrity of the elections in Albania. Perceptions of this indicator for the parliamentary elections held in the 2013-2021 period are very low. The changes in the values of this indicator from the 2013 parliamentary elections to the 2021 parliamentary elections are consistent with the major amendments of the Electoral Code and the Criminal Code of the Republic of Albania. These amendments have significantly increased the penalties for electoral subjects or candidates who violate the requirements set out in the Electoral Code for the transparency of funding sources. The use of dirty money for electoral purposes and vote-buying are classified as electoral corruption. Despite this, campaign finance is considered an indicator with a negative effect on election integrity. This means that legislation amendments alone are not enough to improve this situation. The whole society must continuously form a democratic culture that could regulate the electoral process and vote behavior.

Election Day

Based on the observations and perceptions related to the implementation of all procedures during the election day, the opening of the polling stations, voting process, closing, and the administration of the election materials until their delivery to the counting centers, it can be stated that, at this stage, the corresponding indicator for 2021 parliamentary election was evaluated at the very high level. Compared to 2013, the parliamentary elections held in 2017, the value of this indicator has increased significantly, by about 69.1 percentage points. To a considerable extent, this result is a consequence of important amendments to the Electoral Code, the use of information technology for biometric identification of voters, and real-time monitoring with cameras of the work of the polling station commissions.

Evaluation, Vote Count, and Tabulation of the Results

Evaluation, counting of votes, and tabulation of results are among the procedures for which it is assessed that law enforcement has established a lasting positive tradition. The indicator that reflects this phase of the electoral process during the three parliamentary elections is very high.

Complaints about the Result

The significant decline in positive perceptions for this indicator, by about 44.3 percentage points from the 2013 to 2021 parliamentary elections, is because CEC restructuring failed to meet expectations. The perception of the political burden that accompanied the behavior of the Complaints and Sanctions Commission members in the administration of complaints is the main factor that caused this decline.

Electoral Authorities

The role of electoral bodies, CEC (Central Election Commission), CEAZ (Zonal Administration of Vote), and VCC (Voting Center Counting) in the preparation and administration of the electoral process is very important for the integrity of election because the fulfillment of standards in elections, to a considerable extent, depends on their work in law enforcement. During the 2013-2021 period, perceptions of law enforcement by electoral bodies have increased positively. The 2021 indicator 'Electoral authorities' is evaluated with 60.75 points for the parliamentary elections, classified at a high level.

Election Integrity Index for Parliamentary Elections, PEI_{2013} , PEI_{2017} , PEI_{2021}

According to the methodology developed by Norris *et al.* (2014) for evaluating the Perceptions of Election Integrity Index (PEI), the average values of the indicators should be used, each of which reflects the different phases and various aspects of the electoral process.

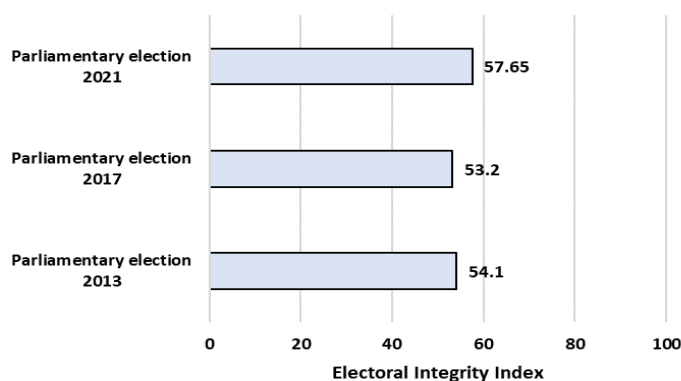


Figure 3: PEI Election Integrity Index (Source: Harvard Dataverse and authors' depiction)

The value of the PEI for the Albanian parliamentary elections held on 25 April 2021 results in 57.65 points (Figure 3). Based on this value of the PEI, referring to the level of fulfillment of the standards, the parliamentary elections in 2021 should be classified at a moderate level. Compared to the parliamentary elections in 2013, the value of PEI has increased by about 6.6 percentage points, and compared to the parliamentary elections held in 2017 has increased by about 8.3 percentage points (Figure 3). These are only evidence indicating the tendency to improve the fulfillment of standards in political elections in Albania. This tendency is not statistically significant ($p > 0.05$). Consequently, it can be stated that, in Albania, in general terms, there have been no significant positive developments in the fulfillment of the standards that characterize democratic elections.

Table 3: Relationship between PEI, Democracy, and Corruption Index (Source: Authors' depiction)

Parliamentary Elections	PEI (Source: Norris <i>et al.</i> 2019; authors' depiction)	Democracy Index (Source: The Economist Intelligence Unit Limited 2021)	Corruption Index (Source: Transparency International, Corruption Perceptions Index 2020)
2013	54.1	5.67	31
2017	53.2	5.98	38
2021	57.7	6.08	36

Such a situation shows that Albania continues to be a country that faces the challenges of a developing democracy. This is evidenced by the link between the PEI and the Democracy and Corruption Index (Table 3). The data shows that the trend of changes in the Electoral Integrity Index is almost the same as changing perceptions for the Democracy Index and Corruption Index.

CONCLUSION

The comparative analysis of the indicators used to evaluate the integrity index of the elections for the parliamentary elections in 2013, 2017, and 2021 shows that Albania is a country that continues to face challenges in developing a representative democracy. The progress identified in meeting the standards for democratic elections during 2013-2021 is insufficient to classify Albania among the countries with PEI at a high level. Albania continues to be a country that holds political elections with a moderate level of integrity. This development is also compatible with the level of development of democracy and the level of corruption in Albania.

The efforts of the Albanian society, as a post-communist one, to conduct democratic elections have resulted in positive achievements in several areas, such as:

- Compilation of electoral legislation aligned with international and EU requirements and standards.
- Increased legislative and institutional capacities necessary for compiling the voter list.

- Correct implementation of the law and legal procedures by the election administration and citizens during the election day, in the counting and tabulation of the results process.

In order to increase public confidence in the electoral process and to improve the level of the election integrity index, it is needed to:

- improve the legal framework for funding and transparency and the use of public assets in the election campaign,
- support the processes related to the role of media and their editorial independence during the elections,
- improve the legal framework related to the pre and post-election day complaints and appeals procedures,
- design the boundaries of constituencies based on geographical criteria and administrative or historical boundary lines, excluding the electoral political interest that triggers the 'salamander' phenomenon.

The comparative analysis of the indicators based on which the PEI assessment was made for the three parliamentary elections cycles shows that the approach of political parties to democratic processes is more refractory than the behavior and commitment of citizens to these processes. The behavior of political parties in the electoral process is one of the main factors that challenge the efforts of Albanian society to develop as a democratic society.

COMPLIANCE WITH ETHICAL STANDARDS

Acknowledgments:

Not applicable.

Funding:

Not applicable.

Statement of human rights:

This article does not contain any studies with human participants performed by any authors.

Statement on the welfare of animals:

This article does not contain any studies with animals performed by any authors.

Informed consent:

Not applicable.

REFERENCES

1. ACE Encyclopedia: Electoral Integrity. 2013. www.aceproject.org
2. European Commission for Democracy Through Law (Venice Commission). 2002. "Code of Good Practice in Electoral Matters". Strasbourg, 25 October 2018. www.venice.coe.int
3. Finn, V. 2019. "Democracy in Croatia: From stagnant 1990s to rapid change 2000–2019". *International Political Science Review*. Volume: 42 issue: 2, page(s): 197–212
<https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0192512119863140>
4. IDM. 2015. "Electoral integrity-Albanian Local election". 21 June 2015
https://idmalbania.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/IDM-Report_2015-2016_Eng-2.pdf
5. INSIZ/AIESD. 2021. "Preliminary report", Parliamentary election 24 April 2021. ISBN-13: 9780198716334. www.insiz.org
6. KRIIK. 2021. "Statement of Preliminary Findings and Conclusions on the Electoral Process". <https://kriik.al/home/en/2021/04/26/press-conference/>
7. Marginean, I. 1997. "Indicators of Democratization in Romania". *Social Indicators Research* Vol. 42, No. 3 (Nov. 1997), pp. 353–366.
<https://ideas.repec.org/a/spr/soinre/v42y1997i3p353-366.html>
8. Mesfin, B. 2008. "Democracy, elections & political parties: A conceptual overview with special emphasis on Africa", ISS Paper 166, July 2008,
<https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/98951/PAPER166.pdf>
9. Norris, Pippa; Richard W. Frank, Ferran Martínez. 2013. "Assessing the quality of elections", *Journal of Democracy* 24(4): 124–135.
<https://www.hks.harvard.edu/publications/assessing-quality-elections>
10. Norris, Pippa; Richard W. Frank and Ferran Martinez i Coma. 2014. "Measuring electoral integrity around the world: a new dataset". *PS: Political Science & Politics* 47(4): 789–798
<https://dataverse.harvard.edu/dataset.xhtml?persistentId=doi:10.7910/DVN/MQCI3U>
11. Norris, Pippa; Richard W. Frank, Ferran Martínezi Coma. 2014. (Eds.) "Advancing electoral integrity". Oxford University Press.
<https://oxford.universitypressscholarship.com/view/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199368709.001.0001/acprof-9780199368709>
12. Norris, Pippa; Max Grömping. 2019. "Perceptions of Electoral Integrity (PEI-7.0)".
<https://dataverse.harvard.edu/dataset.xhtml?persistentId=doi%3A10.7910%2FDVN%2FPDYRWL>
13. OSCE/ODIHR. 2003. "Handbook for Domestic Election Observers".
<https://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/70289>
14. Thomassen, J. 2014. "Elections and Democracy: Representation and Accountability". Oxford Scholarship Online. Print ISBN-13: 9780198716334.
doi: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198716334.001.0001
15. Transparency International. 2020. <https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2020>
16. Vukovic, I. 2010. "The post-communist political transition of Montenegro: Democratization prior to Europeanization". *Journal of Contemporary European Studies* 1(2):2010 http://www.ces.upol.cz/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/2-10_vukovic.pdf

Copyright © 2022 The author/s

This work is licensed under a CC-BY 3.0 license

(*) Corresponding Author

Peer review method: Double-blind

Received: 16.02.2022

Accepted: 28.03.2022

Published: 14.06.2022

Original scientific article

DOI: <https://www.doi.org/10.47305/JLIA2282087a>

How to cite:

Evi , Aryati Arbay, and Santoso Widodo Ari. 2022. "THE POST-TRUTH PHENOMENON INFILTRATING THE US POLITICAL SYSTEM, MEDIA, AND POPULACE: THE CRITICAL THINKING ANALYSIS ABOUT DONALD TRUMP'S POLITICAL LEADERSHIP". *Journal of Liberty and International Affairs* 8 (2):87-107. <https://e-jlia.com/index.php/jlia/article/view/600>.



THE POST-TRUTH PHENOMENON INFILTRATING THE US POLITICAL SYSTEM, MEDIA, AND POPULACE: THE CRITICAL THINKING ANALYSIS ABOUT DONALD TRUMP'S POLITICAL LEADERSHIP

Evi Aryati Arbay^{1*}, Ari Santoso Widodo²

¹London School of Public Relations - Jakarta, Indonesia  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8130-4940> ✉ 19210320043@lspr.edu

²London School of Public Relations - Jakarta, Indonesia  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8703-8068> ✉ ari.swp@lspr.edu

Abstract: Donald J. Trump, one of the 2016 US presidential candidates, is thought to have benefited from political fact-doctoring in his attempt to diminish his adversary's reputation using the post-truth phenomena. This research aimed to identify and analyze post-truth phenomena that infiltrated the political system, media, and the American people during Donald J. Trump's leadership. This study used a qualitative approach with a critical thinking analysis method. The findings found that individual rationality's post-truth disrupted and then directed to online information impulses, in which people tended to seek information that supported their own opinions, particularly on issues connected to Donald J. Trump's leadership in all sectors of policy, including irrelevant facts or reality and the use of language increasingly exploited by hyperbole without a clear basis reference.

Keywords: Post-Truth; Post-Trust; US Political System; Political Leadership; Critical Thinking Analysis; Donald Trump

INTRODUCTION

The election of Donald J. Trump as President of the United States (US) is a sign that society has entered the Post-truth era. In this era, people ignore ethical opinions and prioritize hoaxes and fake news, leading to the truth with the desired taste even though this does not reflect the true truth (Grinberg *et al.* 2019). This case is an example that today's society has entered the post-truth era. Social media played a big role in Donald J. Trump's victory. Public opinion formed through social media is stronger than the facts, and the public believes more in information spread through various social media broadcasts.

The convergence of communication and information technology affects the increasing diversity of communication media, ranging from forms to responsive activities. Cyberspace has entered a new phase where it has shifted various human activities from political, social,

economic, cultural, spiritual, sex and so on in the real world into various forms of artificial substitution so that whatever can be done in the real world can now be done in artificial forms in cyberspace (Iyengar and Massey 2019). Information technology has broken down space, time, place, and distance leading to the digital era. According to Lecheler and Kruikemeier (2016), the massive advancement of information technology extends to all fields. It leaves with a negative effect so that the information flood in the era of the digital revolution carries some social impacts. The community's problem is not how to get news but the lack of ability to digest correct information.

The credibility of the mainstream media, which has constantly undermined the interests of elites and owners, forces the public to seek alternative information (Lewandowsky, Ecker, and Cook 2017). People prefer to use social media like Twitter to convey their news/ information. This shift is also since the mass media, as the mainstream news/information provider, has been considered a political partisan (McStay 2018). The chaos of the virtual media situation has received a surge of energy in the political year. Such a situation is explored by groups or politicians using all means, including creating and spreading hoax or hoax content. The massive hoax phenomenon spreads to the consumption of netizens every day. On the one hand, many people are skeptical of the credibility of mass media, but on the other hand, hoaxes show that people easily trust various social media information (Park and Rim 2019).

Society is conditioned to ignore truth verification where the credibility of news, messages, or opinions is often unquestionable, and lies can creep in through people's confusion while distinguishing between news, opinions, facts, and analysis (Tandoc, Lim, and Ling 2019). Post-truth is a period that tends to ignore facts and truth, while hoaxes can be interpreted as false/false news or information. Furthermore, Tandoc, Lim, and Ling (2018) said that post-truth is associated with nihilism, narcissism, skepticism, and post-modernism, which reject universal truth. The above phenomena construct and provide a brief but comprehensive description of the important substance of how the United States deals with hoaxes, social media, and post-truth, which are portrayed by scientific studies and credible information from mainstream media. According to Allcott and Gentzkow (2017), people in the current post-truth era are not looking for the truth but rather for affirmation, confirmation, and support for their beliefs. Post-truth is a big lie that shakes a world where big lies cannot be controlled. Big lies have great potential for many people to believe.

One example of a shocking lie was when Donald Trump's followers fabricated lies about Hillary Clinton. Hillary is said to have built a prison in Alaska that could accommodate around 3 million American prisoners. The information spread very quickly. In two hours, the information was read 230,000 times. Lies can be fabricated very easily and quickly, but refuting a lie takes a very long time. In 2017, the people of the United States were shocked by the arrest of the Saracen syndicate. The syndicate produced and distributed fake news, hate speeches, racial and religion issues. The contents produced by this syndicate were merely for economic purposes. According to Alimi (2019), post-truth marks an era filled with denial of facts and common sense where fake news, hoaxes, and even conspiracy theories can go viral easily and be trusted by the public. Increased access and technological sophistication in accessing and producing news cause the post-truth reality of being something unavoidable to anyone active on the internet

(Kurniawan 2018). Allcott and Gentzkow (2017) argued that fake news is fake news, fake news that is not based on facts, and a hoax is false information based on fabricated facts.

This research aims to identify and analyze post-truth phenomena that infiltrate the political system, media, and the US population in critical thinking analysis under Donald J. Trump's leadership.

METHODS

Research Approach and Design

This study employs a qualitative approach with a modified method from Adele Clarke's situational analysis as the main method. Adele Clarke (2003) stated that situational analysis might provide a method by which the researcher can have an in-depth interactive process of understanding the data. Based on the tradition of Grounded Theory, the situational analysis offers a much deeper process of analysis that is deemed suitable for understanding the data of this research. Clarke, Friese, and Washburn (2016) argued that situational analysis also allows for a much deeper critical analysis by analyzing the data elements through a critical thinking process concerning the various contexts.

The qualitative research approach is a research procedure that produces descriptive data in written or spoken words from people and observed behavior (Creswell 2017). According to Berger (2011), critical thinking is the process of finding, obtaining, evaluating, analyzing, synthesizing, and conceptualizing information as a guide for developing one's thinking with self-awareness; and the ability to use this information to increase creativity and take risks. Analysis of critical thinking is a unique and purposeful way of thinking where thinkers systematically establish intellectual criteria and standards in reasoning, constructing thoughts, directing thinking constructs according to certain standards, and assessing the effectiveness of thinking according to the goals, criteria, and standards of thinking (Al-Dahdouh, Osório and Caires 2015).

Back to situational analysis, Clarke, Friese, and Washburn (2015) described the three levels of mapping usually conducted: situational map, social world/arenas map, and positional map. In this research, this process is conducted as layers, where each mapping process was conducted as research process layers where each layer was done after the previous process finished.

Setting

According to Paul and Elder (2016), critical thinking is a directed and measured assessment that produces interpretations, analyses, evaluations, conclusions, and explanations of factual, conceptual, methodological, critical, or contextual considerations on which the assessment is based. Frederick (2013) stated that critical thinking skills have two dimensions, namely the cognitive dimension and the affective disposition dimension. Critical thinking analysis begins with understanding critical thinking into goals and self-regulatory assessments that produce interpretations, analyses, evaluations, conclusions, explanations of evidence, conceptual, methodology, and criteria as contextual considerations (Adair and Jaeger 2016).

This study offers a unique setting with analytical characteristics that reveal facts about the post-truth phenomenon in the US during President Donald J. Trump's administration with various government system policies he controlled.

Collecting Technique and Data Analysis

The researchers tried to collect information data from a variety of literature. Therefore the data collection methods used were literature study, observation, and documentation techniques by tracing various written reference sources containing information about Donald J. Trump, post-truth, and the United States Government under his auspices to be investigated. The stages of data collection techniques also benefitted from journals or articles that have been previously done and analyzed by current other researchers. The steps in data analysis include 1) Identifying the problem; 2) Collecting and compiling the necessary information; 3) Evaluating data, facts, and statements; 4) Recognizing assumptions; 5) Observing the logical relationship between the problem and the answer; 6) Use of appropriate, clear, and distinctive language; 7) Finding ways to deal with problems; 8) Finding creative ways to deal with problems; 9) Conclusion/opinions from the issues or issues being discussed (Trisliatanto 2020).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Post-Truth: The US Information Dillema about Firehose of Falsehood

For some time, political and social panoramas will be marked by this post-truth climate, where objectivity and rationality give way to emotions or the willingness to uphold beliefs even though the facts show otherwise (Barton 2019). Post-truth is a term or climate that relates to or represents situations where personal beliefs and feelings are more influential in forming public opinion than objective facts. They choose to make social media a source of news. In 2016 it was released that 62 percent of the American population will use social media to stay up to date (Fransen and Levin 2017). Not everything on the platform is the truth. The internet has changed the way people communicate, not only in terms of speed but also by allowing individuals to find and integrate around other groups with biases similar to their own, thereby strengthening their beliefs. During this period, people influence the public by prioritizing sensationalism and driving emotionality (Guess, Nyhan, and Reifler 2020).

The public is more interested in the excitement of news, so they are more affected by news and things that touch feelings, such as making people feel happy, giving birth to sadness, disappointment, anger, etc. The public is more sensitive when touched a little emotionally, so all the pillars of the post-truth phenomenon have in common where personal beliefs, which for many people have undeniably gained strength in the face of logic and facts and have become established as assumptions shared by society confusing public opinion (Herbert, McCrisken and Wroe 2019). In this climate, new ways of relating to public opinion emerged, and alternative media became firmly established. Besides, Jacques, Islar, and Lord (2019) explained that the ease of access to information technology encourages individuals to create and broadcast their media

to emphasize the point of virtual logical dystopia through the relationship between ideology and reality.

Events can be invented from all thoughts, which are framed in such a way as to fit the ethos of the subject using the phenomenon. In other words, nothing happens except events that are perpetuated on social media networks bearing the idea of authority (Strömbäck *et al.* 2020). Traditional journalism methods are outdone by the emergence of new communication channels such as personal blogs, YouTube, instant messaging channels such as WhatsApp, Telegram, and Facebook Chat, or social media networks such as Snapchat or Twitter (Godler and Reich 2017). A simple Tweet can now mobilize the masses and have an unimaginable effect compared to a few years ago. The spread of fake news causes lying to become commonplace and, hence, the truth's relativization. The value or credibility of the media fades somewhat compared to personal opinion (Waisbord 2018).

The facts come second, while the 'how' a story is told takes precedence over the 'what' or content. Therefore, it is not about what happened but about listening, seeing, and reading a version of the facts closer to everyone's ideology. Corner (2017) stated that five novelties mark the post-truth era: 1) The wide range of access to information content thanks to the digitization of communication; 2) Thanks to the democratization of media and citizen journalism, the public can produce their information through social media thanks to the democratization of media and citizen journalism; 3) The public is more prone to receiving wrong information because of the development of communities of the same ideology; 4) Technology has confused the truth because virality is considered more important than information quality and ethics; 5) Truth no longer needs to be falsified or refuted, but the truth becomes secondary. The five novelties allow power-hungry politicians to manipulate social groups' negative prejudices by manipulating their emotions.

Post-truth attracts emotion and is more than just facts and evidence where fake news and conspiracy theories can go viral in a matter of hours, creating alternative realities and serving the purpose of propaganda that provides easy access to political communication and the influence on people's lives through post-truth discourse seems to have an impact positive towards political interests (Egelhofer and Lecheler 2019). In recent years, the increasing frequency of political leaders and the spread of alternative facts in online media have led to political movements that rely on emotional appeal or data-less opinion rather than fact-based policy discussions. Online social media reshapes controversial communication and mobilizes individuals to participate in social movement activities (Leeder 2019).

Rianto (2020) mentioned the main characteristics of post-truth politics, including 1) Stirring up society with emotional things; 2) Ignoring data and facts; 3) Prioritizing and neutralizing news that is not necessarily true or false; 4) Combining populist movements with conspiracy theories that still need to be tested again; 5) Mobilization of fictional narratives about certain figures or events; 6) Polishing dishonesty in building opinions strengthen the social position of certain figures, groups, or interests in society who are increasingly accustomed to civilization on television, online, android, and social media. In this case, the closeness and connection of certain identities are still a mainstay strategy for gaining votes and support. Presentation of valid and verified data is no longer a mature and main consideration by the community in making choices and decisions.

Tsfati *et al.* (2020) defined a moral panic as a situation when certain groups or conditions are presented as threats or deviations from the values adopted in society in the form of completely new threats or outdated threats that exist in developed forms. An action is categorized as a deviation or a threat that is not seen from the quality or consequences of that action. On the other hand, an action is already categorized as a deviation based on societal values. Politics that divide and weaken people's reasoning have been considered deviant behavior since colonial times. Even after the 2016 presidential election in the United States, a propaganda technique was revealed that was very effective in winning Donald Trump to become president of the United States (Utami 2019).

This propaganda technique is called the Firehose of Falsehood (FoF) technique (Nguyen 2017). This FoF technique can be interpreted literally, namely the tactic of bursts of lies allegedly used by the then-presidential candidate Donald Trump to win the US election in 2016 (Michaels, 2017). This Firehose of Falsehood (FoF) technique uses the spread of obvious and obvious lies as massive propaganda. According to Kowalski (2019), there are four main characteristics of the FoF technique, including the following:

1. High Volume and Multi-Channel, which means that it contains as many lies as possible, has a wide reach and touches many people at one time.
2. Rapid, Continuous, and Repetitive narratives of lies are repeated, non-stop, and massive. The more people who spread it, the more effective it will be. This character is reinforced by the presence of new digital media in addition to mainstream media and adopting the logic of advertising marketing.
3. No Commitment to Objective Reality, a lying narrative has no intention of being difficult to prove or reveal with an objective presentation of facts. The easier it is to dismantle, the more effective it is, then proceeds with another narrative of lies.
4. No Commitment to Consistency, the narrative of lies does not need to be compiled consistently and regularly. So there is no commitment to clarify or replace the narrative with the truth that was done afterward.

If put in the context of a democratic country, the FoF technique hurts the principles and values of democracy. Support for those using these techniques is formed through misinformation, defects in understanding, does not contain the truth or is intentionally misrepresented. The worst thing is to perpetuate power and maintain support. We will use the same method as gaining power: spread more, more massive, instantaneous, and sustainable information lies. This technique is a practice deviating from the democratic state system and made the United States feel a dilemma during the leadership of President Donald J. Trump.

Donald Trump's Political Leadership: Globalization, Relation, and Regulation?

The 2016 presidential election presented a fierce debate between pluralists and solidarity, especially on the leadership patterns of Donald J. Trump. The theory put forward by Barry Buzan, Hedley Bull, and Martin Wight has two pillars, namely pluralism and solidarity (Lamb and Neiheisel 2020). In addition, Rozell and Whitney (2018) state that pluralists emphasize the international order, non-intervention, and state sovereignty, while solidarity

emphasizes the struggle and transformation of the international system towards achieving ideals such as justice and human rights. Pluralism in US foreign policy means the United States is not actively seeking an enemy to crush. Sovereignty and non-intervention are the keywords in pluralism. Pluralists do not want the United States to be involved in the struggle for human values such as human rights and democracy.

Donald Trump was trying to draw the pendulum of US foreign policy toward pluralism with anti-immigration policies, building a giant wall on the Mexico-United States border, and withdrawing US and NATO resources (Vargo, Guo, and Amazeen 2017). Donald Trump was more focused on elaborating pluralism, such as opposition to alliance policies, opposition to humanitarian intervention, and strengthening cooperation with Russia. Surprisingly, Donald Trump's victory as president of the United States did not just create tension for political groups or currents that supported the discourse of globalization where hyper-globalists experience shocks that previously felt that the US would be a catalyst for driving globalization (Humprecht 2018).

However, discourse on de-globalization has emerged to decorate Obama's leadership transfer to Trump. Goodman (2017) defines that nativism as a term that describes Trump's leadership model, which positions the interests of the United States of America, which colors America First's discourse and is seen as a narrow and risky transaction politics. The America First discourse was a declaration and a message to the world community that globalization must struggle with the economic protection model designed by Trump's policies. On the other hand, China felt the presence of this discourse could slow down the pace of globalization. Obama's previous leadership through the Washington administration with an important power agenda and strategy in Asia. Obama's leadership in the second-period positions globalization was an important arena for increasing the complexity of global interdependence.

Information regarding the Pivot to Asia or Asia First was Obama's affirmation that the United States was too concentrated on activities as an actor providing world security through a counter-terrorism agenda but had missed the spectacular economic developments occurring in Asia, particularly in East Asia (including Southeast Asia). The United States had agreed to form mega-regional cooperation called TPP (Trans-Pacific Partnership). A trade cooperation scheme that not only involved various countries but was an ambitious step to implement a more binding multilateral trade. One by one, Obama's policies deemed detrimental after 2007/2008 Global Financial Crisis (GFC) began to be revised by Trump. The economic growth of the US experienced degradation in the GFC decade, while China experienced spectacular growth (see Figure 1).

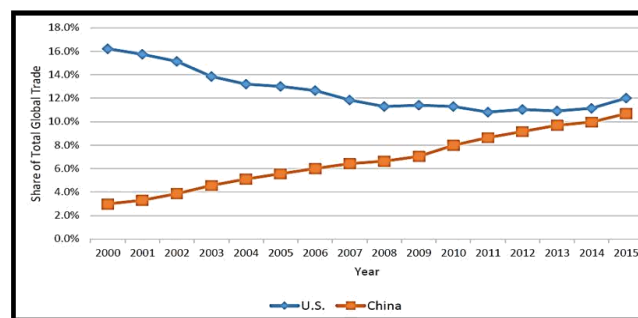


Figure 1: Global Trade Distribution Diagram: the US and China (Source: Walter and Tukachinsky 2019)

Amid globalization, Donald Trump's foreign policy took a protectionist political economy approach, a form of de-globalization. It also explored several international economic and political considerations as the main instrument to see the competition between the United States and China. The idea of globalization sparked various interpretive contestations that are ultimately banal. The popularity of this concept occurred along with several fundamental changes in the structure and behavior of society (Walter and Tukachinsky 2019). According to Schindler (2020), globalization is often understood simply as a reference to several significant changes that have occurred in the last four decades of the XX century, and this has influenced the use of the concept of globalization to be value-free and easily accepted by several scientific disciplines, especially international relations between countries.

Hanitzsch, Van Dalen, and Steindl (2018) said that globalization practically affects the relationship between territorial boundaries, the relationship of regional openness, and the relationship between regional change. Meanwhile, Gibson (2018) stated that globalization conceptually forms a network of interactions (socio-spatial) into five channels: subnational networks, national networks, international networks, transnational networks, and global networks. The basic concept of the definition of globalization is the compression of space and time so that globalization becomes a necessity and the periodization of the times where there is an intensification through the process of integration of people in various countries into world societies (Alder, Lagakos, and Ohanian 2014). The spectrum of globalization is viewed from two different frames. Proponents of globalization feel that the state's role has worn out and consider globalization the most important and relevant historical fact (Fluck 2017).

Barrera *et al.* (2020) argued that an interconnected global economy creates a boundless world characterized by a perfectly integrated international market. The nation-state becomes obsolete and dysfunctional in carrying out economic activities. It is seen that the state sometimes does not realize that its existence is undergoing a transformation, which was merely protecting the population and natural resources from external threats, becoming broader, namely protecting the environment, educating the workforce, and building comfortable and safe social infrastructure. On the other hand, skeptics believe that claims about globalization are overstated. This conversation does not have a standard of analysis or merely an ideological statement, so it is seen as jargon, myth, and empty rhetoric (Schwarz, Newman, and Leach 2016). Skeptics argue that while the state-centered Westphalian model still prevails, the government retains authority in economic and business activities through companies as extensions of the state.

In contrast, the term 'de-globalization' refers to reducing dependence and integration between interacting units in certain aspects such as technology, socio-culture, economy, trade, and even the political sphere on a global scale (Pickard 2016). These circles consider that globalization does not provide significant benefits. In the practice of globalization, a country's international status depends on its resources. The international community that speaks out in full support of globalization is experiencing concerns amid Trump's protectionist system. Trump's election, which requires a reevaluation of the future of globalization, should be the main debate in this paper. Rowe and Alexander (2017) emphasized that globalization which is seen as a continuation of the second wave of globalization is on the verge of regressing.

Unfortunately, the sustainability of globalization faces formidable obstacles, especially in the global economic sector (see Figure 2).

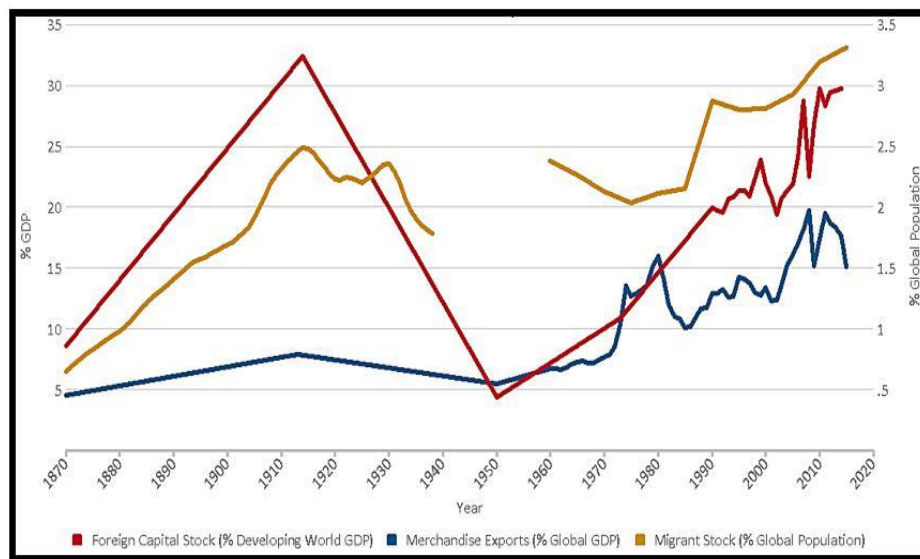


Figure 2: Globalization Trend 1870-2020 (Source: Rowe and Alexander 2017)

A country with a strong economy automatically becomes a superpower. This is related to the economic intervention carried out by strong economies against countries with weaker economies. The intervention was carried out through a funding assistance scheme for developing countries that had just embraced democracy. These countries are given access to the free market. However, what happens is that vulnerable countries will find it difficult to achieve their goals because the domination of the capitalist country controls the system. The skeptical approach refutes the assumptions of globalist supporters who call global economic conditions a state of interdependence (Walter *et al.* 2019). Walter *et al.* (2019) further argued that the power of internationalization depends on the state's power to ensure continued economic liberalization or vice versa, which means that the state is not a passive actor. However, the state is the architect of today's world model.

However, according to Shin and Thorson (2017), globalization does not damage or position the state. Nevertheless, instead, the state is transforming into available forms. The contradiction between countries and globalization is more due to the limitations of state theorization. A fairly similar view states that the exclusion of the state in globalization is naïve. Globalization, which is seen as nullifying the state, accepts that the interaction between countries increases in current conditions (Nelson and Taneja 2018). It is different from those who assess that the existence of a country in the globalization arena allows state entities to experience the evolution of governance forms and the location or locus of sovereignty, starting from tribal or tribal societies, then becoming city-states, nation-states, regional states to the final stage being global states (Lee 2018).

Trump's proclamation regarding revising a more protectionist economic cooperation framework caused turmoil and anxiety for economic actors and observers, especially for economists in the United States and outside the country. At present, globalization has

experienced a setback with introducing a new protectionism attitude. The phenomenon that takes place gives a big conclusion that the trend of globalization established by the United States is inseparable from the 2008 global financial crisis (Goodman 2017). This phenomenon then brings a new map for US policy in globalization. Trump's leadership seems to describe a 'saturation point' for globalization, even though Trump is known as a big businessman in the United States.

This view of globalization held by the United States public was in line with how the Trump administration's decision-making viewed globalization. In his inaugural address, Trump mentioned that he would put America First, in which the United States would prioritize its national interests above anything else. At this time, the idea of America First was realized in both economic and non-economic policies. From an economic point of view, globalization is not considered an optimal choice for the interests of the United States. The multilateral free trade paradigm is considered detrimental to the economic interests of the United States. According to Trump, the United States can no longer tolerate this chronic trade abuse and will not tolerate it (Kowalski 2019). This America First strategy was embodied by Trump's preference for bilateral trade deals over multilateral trade and protectionism policies over free trade.

This shift in the United States' attitude towards globalization was also evident on the non-economic front. From a political point of view, globalization is considered detrimental to the interests of the United States. Under the America First idea, the United States has taken actions such as withdrawing from the Paris climate accord. According to Trump, the Paris climate agreement was unfair to the United States and undermined the United States economy (Nguyen 2017). The United States also demanded a smaller role as a state entity in international affairs. The obligations and responsibilities that the 'global community' expects from the United States in a globalizing world are incompatible with compatible interests. They are seen as unwanted burdens incompatible with the 'America First' values.

One of the consequences of pessimism in addressing the phenomenon of globalization, especially related to the declining role of the state, is the discourse of de-globalization. According to Humprecht (2018), the discourse of globalization is necessary because it has happened before, namely in the era before World War I. At that time, especially around 1870 until World War I, the world changed similar to the conditions we experience today. With the mobility of trade, capital, and labor and labor, fast-growing communications via telegram across the Atlantic Ocean, exports of goods and capital flows reached their highest volume and could not be matched until the 1980s. However, all these advances seemed to stop when World War I broke out. Today, the United States can be an empire that has passed its peak. The budget deficit increases as the number of older people increases, so social security spending also increases. The ability to send troops abroad has also declined, with only 500,000 personnel, a very small number to win wars or small-scale conflicts involving the United States worldwide.

Trump would indeed make a foreign policy change referring to the consecutive nationalistic paradigm, or whether Trump was pursuing a pragmatic policy, by seeing the dependence of the United States on a very high axis of globalization and at the same time as hegemonic power (Herbert, McCrisken, and Wroe 2019). Trump proclaimed the discourse of America First or Make America Great Again. This discourse could be interpreted as an effort to bring the United States back to its former glory when framing post-World War globalization and

winning the Cold War. During his victory speech, Trump pointed out that he would use creative, talented, and intelligent people to build the United States for the good and benefit of all Americans (Lamb and Neihei 2020). According to Kowalski's (2019) view, Trump was trying to make the United States like three decades ago, when the United States was very influential globally, with Trump's policies being protectionist and in a unilateral direction. Today, Trump views the United States as the United States experiencing an economic setback caused by other countries taking advantage of the United States.

Likewise, Higgins (2016) argued that there would be a kind of rationalization of foreign policy adjusted to internal policies not to be too expansive from an economic point of view. US policies will tend to be more closed or introverted. The United States, under the leadership of Donald Trump, was scheduled to build a wall that divides the southern region of the United States, which becomes the barrier between the United States and Mexico. The wall to be built is 3,200 kilometers long. There are various constraints in this development especially related to the funding of this project. Even so, Trump insisted that he would continue to build the United States-Mexico barrier. The construction of this national border wall was due to the large number of immigrants from Mexico who entered the territory of the United States. Trump considered immigrants from Mexico, especially illegal immigrants, only to cause problems that could threaten national stability and security, especially in the southern region of the United States.

Immigrants were considered to be the masterminds of various detrimental crimes. Of course, this left an impact on higher competitiveness for American workers. Through his policies, Trump sought to prioritize the people of the United States during global competition and competition, especially with Mexican immigrants. For Trump, the issue of climate change was not a top priority for the USA. The issue of climate change was considered only to hinder the progress of the United States in the economic aspect (Fransen and Levin 2017). Some of the controversial decisions that Trump made by signing the withdrawal of the United States from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Clean Power Plan (CPP) in 2017 and leaving the Paris Agreement or agreement (Fransen and Levin 2017). In the Obama era, some of these policies were one of the US strategic policies to show their position on the international stage on environmental issues, especially climate change. Even in the 2015 Paris Agreement, the United States, through President Obama, became the pioneer of the agreement. However, for Trump, this was not important; the USA had to be able to maximize its energy potential for the advancement of the country.

Important policies are also applied to the immigration sector. Trump prohibited several countries with a majority Muslim population from entering the territory of the United States, including Syrian refugees who spread to various countries to seek refuge (travel ban). This policy was closely related to the fight against terrorism. It can be understood that Trump was taking a more direct position to protect his country without any connection with any party or country in suppressing acts of terrorism occurring in the USA through immigration policies. Unlike the previous presidents of the USA, Bush and Barack Obama, they carried out more general military cooperation with various countries to combat terrorist acts (War on Terror). Trump was considered more concerned with the United States than countries outside the United States. One of Trump's most prominent policy concerns was the economic model that tended to be protectionist. Trump signed an executive order appealing to the United States in the Trans-

Pacific Partnership (TPP) partnership, which had been Obama's concern with the discourse on economic balancing in the Asia-Pacific.

On the second day, Trump confirmed his intention to renegotiate the North America Free Trade Area (NAFTA) with Canada and Mexico. This phenomenon then affirms the skeptics that Trump is merely rhetorical. Unfortunately, Trump pursued a foreign economic policy that tends to distort the facts about the position of the United States in the arena of globalization. Historically, the United States has been a driver and connoisseur of economic globalization, which has benefited from its economy's acceleration for more than 70 years. The US financial crisis wreaked havoc on domestic and global economic growth. However, the US must remember that the per capita income of everyone in the United States has grown, which was in the range of \$15,000 to more than \$50,000 between 1950 and 2015 (Goodman 2017). Matthew Goodman collects global economic phenomena in the form of major shortcomings over the past seven decades, namely that they no longer provide so broad a range of benefits.

Unfortunately, Trump was here and exacerbated the risk if he took protectionist policies. The policies pursued by Trump were the main characteristics of political economy realism, with political security and economic security as the main consideration. Wealth to power logic is the right path to explain the political dynamics so far. Several analyzes are quite prominent in paying attention to this approach, one of which is Trump's approach as a state development effort (statecraft) through an inseparable economic-political dimension. First, the United States is too big a burden on the world, especially international security, while other countries enjoy it. Second, the US is currently experiencing economic degradation where global trade based on multilateralism is considered detrimental.

The US Political System, Media, and Populace during President Donald Trump's Administration

Public participation becomes important when the democratic system in the USA implements direct elections with electoral voters (Grinberg *et al.* 2019). It aims to enable the realization of an orderly and peaceful transfer of government leadership. Community political ethics has a goal and consensus for the common good, namely members of society within the scope of the state. Political and ethical values contain respect for human dignity, striving for the common good for all groups, and the principle of solidarity (Bennett and Livingston 2018). Critical literature regarding the democratic party seems ideal for leading to a government that upholds state ethics where this polarized public situation is swiftly used to gain the greatest sympathy and support from the public (Barton 2019).

During the Trump campaign, fake news was allegedly being used, including accusing Obama and Hillary of being the founders of ISIS, the existence of around 30 million illegal immigrants and mass deportations, the American unemployment rate of 42%, and the presidential debate moderators were not neutral because they were supporters of the Democratic Party, and many more (Herbert, McCrisken, and Wroe 2019). After the lies were confirmed with facts, according to Grinberg *et al.* (2019), the Trump camp quickly called it not a lie but alternative facts. A study from PolitiFact found that 70% of Trump's statements were categorized as mostly false and untruth. For this 'achievement', Trump was awarded the Lie of the Year in 2015 and 2017 (Aldwairi and Alwahedi 2018).

To put the national interests above all else, the US rejected and ignored the demands of globalization. According to Guess, Nyhan, and Reifler (2020), the protectionism discourse often conveyed through Trump's leadership has taken place in Barack Obama's leadership, especially after the 2008 financial crisis. The United States' economic turbulence moved to disturb global economic growth. The crisis chain was gradually responded to by restoring the state's role as a total institution in solving the problems. The United States made efforts to save the domestic trade and financial sector with the involvement of a more active state before. The discourse on neoliberalism, which had often been the breath of globalization, became less enthusiastic because the state has begun to break through economic activities that previously left the market as the main actor (Iyengar and Massey 2019).

In economic and political integration conditions that are starting to grow among countries, the discourse of nationalism remains a luxury in itself for certain countries (McStay 2018). The momentum of the global crisis provided the fact that the state is needed again; this phenomenon becomes a new chapter for state entities that are transforming into available forms so that the globalization narrative must also be interpreted as driving the strengthening of countries that were not seen as important forces but present as new forces such as the spectacular rise of China (Lewandowsky, Ecker, and Cook 2017). The state is the most phenomenal political unit that tries to maintain its authority (state sovereignty), even though it is overshadowed by the power of actors other than the state.

The presence of the global financial crisis phenomenon and the strengthening of the state's role are two main challenges to globalization. In general, Trump's statecraft policy concerns that efforts to deepen the state's role (deep state) in responding to the economic-political competition must be considered in economic and political security (Michaels 2017). Trump's economic policies could affect the US status as an increasingly eroded superior nation. With a new set of protectionist agendas, business groups in the United States or major partners in the United States will feel that they are losing their protective power in the future because they have been guaranteed (carrot) from forms of economic cooperation before Trump's leadership.

The mass media need a sensational news theme to captivate viewers' attention. It will attract advertisers who have capital (Walter and Murphy 2018; Schindler 2020). Information that can generate polemics is interesting and can bring benefits (Reich and Barnoy 2019). Deviations can be present from novelty so that people feel they need moral boundaries to maintain the old order (*status quo*). In other cases, deviations can be present from values known for a long time and are recorded in society's collective memory but raised on the surface to become a scapegoat for certain situations. The media is the main intermediary in shaping people's attitudes and behavior. The media can actively compile and construct events or facts with a series of good and bad values, what is common and what is deviant.

CONCLUSION

The results of this study conclude that the post-truth of individual rationality is interrupted and led to online information instincts and tends not to seek information in support of their opinions but rather seek the truth of opinions that supports their own beliefs, especially in matters related to the leadership of US President Donald J. Trump and all sectors of the policies it implements including the irrelevance of facts, reality, and truth so that language is increasingly exploited by rhetoric without a clear foundation or reference. Nonsense is relatively simple in pre-post-truth, but now that it has evolved, post-truth has become a complex series of rhetorical strategies, including fake news that aims to blaspheme one another, attacks on fake news, and even the paradox of reality occurs. Dramatized and sensational versions of fake news of interest have flocked to trending topics in the media and public ratios because statements of political discourse are carefully counted to get public attention.

Political discourse in the post-truth era takes a central role in accommodating deliberate common sense blindness and drawing emotionally based arguments. Exploiting fear through hoaxes and fake news creates hatred towards different groups or minority groups. At this point, polarization occurs, and the public (audience) splits instantly. In this post-truth era, support is often based solely on personal emotional preference, not on factual truth in studying a phenomenon. The gap between conservative and progressive groups is widening. Each group is suspicious of the other. Prejudice has taken hold of both sides. The progressives see conservatives as stupid and stubborn, always afraid of new ideas. On the other hand, conservatives see progressives as cunning and like to use their intelligence to manipulate and do not appreciate traditional values. In fact, as a society, there is no clear separation between conservative and progressive.

The two groups unite to enrich each other's thoughts and insights. To create an open-minded community environment but still maintains order in dealing with one another. A democratic party is a joy and excitement that prioritizes the community's interests, entirely not a part of a particular group. The presidential election should be positioned as a contestation of ideas and ideals, not the spread of fear through lies, panic and noise, and pessimism. Although not always ideal, the polarization that leads to mutual hatred between groups will hinder the nation's progress. Actions that ultimately destroy the social order are considered deviant behavior. Even though it needs to be admitted, 'democracy' still has weaknesses, especially in the post-truth era, where the flood of information can influence the minds and awareness of the audience to make choices not based on empirical truth but rather on emotional preferences alone.

The findings of this study are to critically analyze news and information using a theory of truth in the form of correspondence truth, namely the truth that is achieved if statements are always accompanied by relevant facts (Riady 2018). A positivistic nature of science supports the truth of correspondence. Every truth must have facts that accompany and can be accessed by the five senses. Significant information is already available on social media and can be accessed anytime, anywhere, and by anybody. The information provided contains the truth; some are not verified. It becomes incorrect because the information is not based on data taken from facts in the field. Information is only based on personal feelings and beliefs. For example, there is

information on social media about the economic downturn due to the infrastructure improvement program.

There is no complete mention of the data that support the intent of the title it raises, which is then transmitted through mass media and social media. It is exacerbated by the public's behavior that accepts the information and uses it without fact-checking, correction, and skepticism. Hoax is claimed to be the basis of truth and is used as a basis for arguing with other parties. Hoax turns into facts that serve as the basis for attacking the arguments of his opponents. This is often used by campaign teams, spokespeople, and debate contestants in the presidential election contestation arena. There is a fact of the use of bursts of lies in the winning strategy for the presidential election. A person can be confident enough and find justification for an action that uses fear and hatred to power.

Recommendations and Limitation

Something has changed from the days before the advent of new digital media, especially post-industrial journalism. If previously news sources were centered on the mainstream media, now news sources, news producers, and news consumers are the public itself (Nasrullah 2012). The development of new media (digital and internet-based) and the birth of the citizen journalism movement are one of the bases to see new relations between the press and audiences. So far, the discourse on media and audiences, especially towards traditional media, has placed audiences in a passive position. The public only receives information from the press and does not have the freedom to produce knowledge. Public audiences are divided into passive audiences and active audiences. However, what is meant by an active audience is an audience that remains a consumer and not a producer of media content or news.

In this digital era, the real change is the ability of the media to become an interactive platform. Initially, panic moral amplification. It only seen as a public reaction to information in the mass media. Now that it has shifted, moral panic occurs when the public responds and interacts through digital mass media and social media from their devices. Regarding the logic of the information society, the public has various sources of information besides the mainstream mass media and social media or forums based on ideological closeness. The public should not constantly refer to the mass media for information. However, the public already considers the mass media a reliable source of information. From this attitude of society, the moral panic amplification is getting bigger.

People are already relying on information about facts through the media they consume. In this case, the media does not only act as a provider of information. An editorial and editorial frames made by the mass media are another form of mass media's function as a reference for interpreting values in society which becomes the basis for the public to act on social reality. As the fourth pillar of a democratic country, the media (especially the mainstream mass media) have a role in realizing a civilized and ethical society. The media have long served as agents of moral judgment according to their rights. Reports about certain 'reality' and 'truth' can inevitably generate attention, anxiety, anger, or panic (Cohen 1972).

The moral panic that occurs in the community due to the transmission of messages by the mass media can get over with solutions for peaceful journalism. With the central role of the

media in this democratic country, the public wants the mass media to have a big share in the issue of tolerance to anticipate the division of the nation. Previously, journalists only reported sensations without essence, unbalanced news, minimal verification, and looking safe from press abuse and bias against certain parties, so the concept of peaceful journalism expected the opposite. The alignment issue is important because it will encourage the media to present content amplifying moral panic, propaganda, disinformation, and misinformation.

The press's responsibility to the public comes first. Instead of applying market logic, the mass media played an active role in the vortex of the conflict. This is because the parties involved in the media have the same political, cultural, or ideological understanding as to the parties in conflict. This logic leads to distorted news production. Media independence is fading. The mass media will process and manipulate facts to lead the public to the opinion that the media hopes about the political uproar. The media will launch a way for the public to be lulled by and assume that the real truth about the conflict is what is presented in the media. The media will take down opponents they think are untrue.

COMPLIANCE WITH ETHICAL STANDARDS

Acknowledgments:

The corresponding author is a postgraduate student of International Communication at the London School of Public Relations who is interested in studying political communication, media, and regional studies under mentoring of Dr. Ari Santoso Widodo as the senior lecturer for media and regional studies at the London School of Public Relation (LSPR). He also holds the role of Director of E-learning (Undergraduate) Program at LSPR. This article forms the results of the author's temporary research that focuses on the 'Post-Truth Phenomenon Infiltrating the US Political System, Media, and Populace: The Critical Thinking Analysis about Donald Trump's Political Leadership' with the data used in this research is secondary data from research journals, documentation, articles and written archives that are relevant to research material.

Funding:

Not applicable.

Statement of human rights:

This article does not contain any studies with human participants performed by any authors.

Statement on the welfare of animals:

This article does not contain any studies with animals performed by any authors.

Informed consent:

Not applicable.

REFERENCES

1. Adair, D. & Jaeger, M. 2016. "Incorporating Critical Thinking into an Engineering Undergraduate Learning". *Environment*, 5(2), 23-39.
DOI: <http://doi.org/10.5430/ijhe.v5n2p23>.
2. Alder, S., Lagakos, D. & Ohanian, L. 2014. "The Decline of the USA Rust Belt: A Macroeconomic Analysis". *Center for Quantitative Economic Research: Working Paper Series*, 14(5), 1-40.
3. Al-Dahdouh, A. A., Osório, A. J. & Caires, S. 2015. "Understanding Knowledge Network, Learning, and Connectivism". *International Journal of Instructional Technology and Distance Learning*, 12(10), 3-21.
4. Aldwairi, M. & Alwahedi, A. 2018. "Detecting Fake News in Social Media Networks" *Procedia: Computer Science*, 141, 215-222.
DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.procs.2018.10.171>
5. Alimi, M. Y. 2019. "Theorizing Internet, Religion and Post Truth: An Article Review". *Komunitas: International Journal of Indonesian Society and Culture*, 11(2), 207-222.
DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.15294/komunitas.v11i2.21860>
6. Allcott, H. & Gentzkow, M. 2017. "Social Media And Fake News In The 2016 Election". *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 31(2), 211-236.
7. Barrera, O., Guriev, S., Henry, E. & Zhuravskaya, E. 2020. "Facts, Alternatives Facts, Alternative Facts Checking In Times of Post-Truth Politics". *Journal of Public Economics*, 182, 1-7. DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jpubeco.2019.104123>
8. Barton, C. C. 2019. "Critical Literacy In The Post-Truth Media Landscape". *Policy Futures in Education*, 17(8), 1024-1036. DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1478210319831569>
9. Bennett, W. L. & Livingston, S. 2018. "The Disinformation Order: Disruptive Communication and Decline Of Democratic Institutions". *European Journal of Communication*, 33(2), 122-139. DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0267323118760317>
10. Berger, A. A. 2011. "Media And Communication Research Methods: An Introduction To Qualitative Approaches (2nd Ed.)". Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
11. Carlson, M. 2015. "Metajournalistic Discourse and the Meanings Of Journalism: Definitional Control, Boundary Work, And Legitimation". *Communication Theory*, 26(4), 349-368. DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.1111/comt.12088>
12. Clarke, A. E. 2003. "Situational Analyses: Grounded Theory Mapping After The Postmodern Turn". *Symbolic interaction*, 26(4), 553-576.
13. Clarke, A. E., Friese, C., & Washburn, R. 2016. "Situational Analysis in Practice: Mapping Research with Grounded Theory". Routledge.
14. Corner, J. 2017. "Fake News, Post-Truth and Media-Political Change. Media, Culture & Society". 7(8), 1-2.
15. Creswell, J. W. (2017). "Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches". London: Sage Publications.
16. Egelhofer, J. L. & Lecheler, S. 2019. "Fake News As A Two Dimensional Phenomenon: A Framework and Research Agenda". *Annals of the International Communication Association*, 43(2), 97-116. DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.1080/23808985.2019.1602782>

18. Fluck, M. 2017. "The Concept Of Truth In International Relations Theory: Critical Thought Beyond Post-Positivism". United Kingdom: Springer Nature, Palgrave Macmillan. DOI:<https://dx.doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-55033-0>
19. Fransen, T. & Levin, K. 2017. "The Climate Effect of The Trump's Administration". New York: InterPress Service News Agency.
20. Frederick, R. 2013. "Encouraging Critical Thinking in Distance Learning: Ensuring Challenging Intellectual Programs". *Information Age Publishing*, 10(2), 131-145.
21. Gibson, T. A. 2018. "The Post-Truth Double-Helix: Reflexivity and Mistrust In Local Politics". *International Journal of Communication*, 12(0), 19-28.
22. Godler, Y. & Reich, Z. 2017. "Journalistic Evidence: Cross-Verification As A Constituent Of Mediated Knowledge". *Journalistic Evidence: Cross-Verification as a Constituent of Mediated Knowledge. Journalism*, 18(5), 558-574. DOI:<https://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1464884915620268>
23. Goodman, M. P. 2017. "Troubling Start For Trump's Economic Statecraft". *CSIS: Global Economics Monthly*, 6(1), 34-44.
24. Grinberg, N., Joseph, K., Friedland, L., Swire-Thompson, B. & Lazer, D. 2019. "Fake News On Twitter During The 2016 Us Presidential Election". *Science*, 363(6425), 374-378. DOI:<https://dx.doi.org/10.1126/science.aau2706>
25. Guess, A. M., Nyhan, B. & Reifler, J. 2020. "Exposure to Untrustworthy Websites in The 2016 Us Election". *Nature Human Behaviour*, 1-9. DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.1038/s41562-020-0833-x>
26. Hanitzsch, T., Van Dalen, A. & Steindl, N. 2018. "Caught In The Nexus: A Comparative And Longitudinal Analysis Of Public Trust In The Press". *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, 23(1), 3-23. DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1940161217740695>
27. Herbert, J., McCrisken, T. & Wroe, A. 2019. "The Ordinary Presidency of Donald J. Trump". Switzerland: Springer Nature, Palgrave Macmillan. DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.1007/978-3-03004943-0>
28. Higgins, K. 2016. "Post-Truth: A Guide for the Perplexed". *Nature News*, 540(7631), 9-15. DOI:<https://dx.doi.org/10.1038/540009a>
29. Humprecht, E. 2018. "Where Fakenews Flourishes: A Comparison Across Four Western Democracies". *Information, Communication & Society*, 1-16. DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2018.147424>
30. Iyengar, S. & Massey, D. S. 2019. "Scientific Communication in a Post-Truth Society". *PNAS: Social Science*, 116(16), 7656-7661.
31. Jacques, C., Islar, M. & Lord, G. 2019. "Post-Truth: Hegemony on Social Media and Implications for Sustainability Communication". *Sustainability*, 11, 1-16. DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.3390/su11072120>
32. Kowalski, J. 2019. "Reading Donald Trump: A Parallax View of the Campaign and Early Presidency". Switzerland: Springer Nature, Palgrave Macmillan. DOI:<https://dx.doi.org/10.1007/978.3.319.93179.1>
33. Lamb, C. M. & Neiheisel, J. C. 2020. "Presidential Leadership and the Trump Presidency Executive Power and Democratic Government". Switzerland: Springer Nature, Palgrave Macmillan. DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.1007/978-3.030.18979.2>

34. Lecheler, S. & Kruikemeier, S. 2016. "Re-Evaluating Journalistic Routines in A Digital Age: A Review Of Research On The Use Of Online Sources". *New Media & Society*, 18(1), 156-171. DOI:<https://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1461444815600412>
35. Lee, S. C. 2018. "Boundary-Breaking Disposition against Post-Truth: Five Big Questions for Religious Education". *Religions*, 9(10). DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.3390/rel9100316>
36. Leeder, C. 2019. "How College Students Evaluate And Share 'Fake News' Stories". *Library and Information Science Research*, 41(3), 10-16. DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.lisr.2019.100967>
37. Lewandowsky, S., Ecker, U. K. H., & Cook, J. 2017. "Beyond Misinformation: Understanding and Coping With the Post-Truth". *Journal of Applied Research in Memory and Cognition*, 6(4), 353-369. DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jarmac.2017.07.008>
38. McStay, A. 2018. "Fake News and the Economy of Emotions: Problems, Causes, Solutions". *Digital Journalism*, 6(2), 154-175. DOI:<https://dx.doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2017.1345645>
39. Michaels, J. D. 2017. "Trump and the "Deep State": The Government Strikes Back". *Foreign Affairs*, 96(5), 52-56.
40. Nelson, J. L. & Taneja, H. 2018. "The Small, Disloyal Fake News Audience: The Role of Audience Availability in Fake News Consumption". *New Media & Society*, 20(10), 3720-3737. DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1461444818758715>
41. Nguyen, H. 2017. "Donald J. Trump And Asia: From Campaign to Government". *Asian Affairs: An American Review*, 44(4), 125-141.
42. Park, K. & Rim, H. 2019. "Social Media Hoaxes, Political Ideology, and the Role of Issue Confidence". *Telematics and Informatics*, 36, 1-11. DOI:<https://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.tele.2018.11.001>
43. Paul, R. & Elder, L. 2016. "Critical Thinking Concepts & Tools". California: The Foundation for Critical Thinking.
44. Pickard, V. 2016. "Media Failures in the Age of Trump". *The Political Economy of Communication*, 4(2), 74-80. Retrieved from: <http://polecom.org/index.php/polecom/article/viewFile/74/264>
45. Reich, Z. & Barnoy, A. 2019. "Disagreements As a Form of Knowledge: How Journalists Address Day To Day Conflicts Between Sources". *Journalism*, 7(1). 84-91. DOI:<https://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1464884918825007>
46. Rianto, P. 2020. "When Lying Becomes On Ordinary Thing: Communication Ethics In The Post Truth Era". *Indonesia Communication Journal*, 9(1), 57-63.
47. Rowe, S. & Alexander, N. 2017. "On Post-Truth, Fake News, And Trust". *NutritionCommunications*, 52(4), 179-182.
48. Rozell, M. J. & Whitney, G. 2018. "Religion and the American Presidency (3rd Ed.)". Switzerland: Springer Nature, Palgrave Macmillan. DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.1007/978.3.319.62175.3>
49. Schindler, S. 2020. "The Task of Critique in Times of Post-Truth Politics". *Review of InternationalStudies*, 46(3), 376-394. DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S0260210520000091>
50. Schwarz, N., Newman, E. & Leach, W. 2016. "Making the Truth Stick & Myths Fade: Lessons from Cognitive Psychology". *Behavioral Science & Policy*, 2(1), 85-95. DOI:<https://dx.doi.org/10.1353/bsp.2016.0009>

51. Shin, J. & Thorson, K. 2017. "Partisan Selective Sharing: The Biased Diffusion of Fact-Checking Messages On Social Media". *Journal of Communication*, 67(2), 233-255. DOI:<https://dx.doi.org/10.1111/jcom.2017.67.issue-2>
52. Strömbäck, J., Tsfaty, Y., Boomgaarden, H., Damstra, A., Lindgren, E., Vliegenthart, R. & Lindholm, T. 2020. "News Media Trust and Its Impact On Media Use: Toward a Framework For Future Research". *Annals of the International Communication Association*, 44(2), 1-18. <https://dx.doi.org/10.1080/23808985.2020.1755338>
53. Tandoc, E. C., Lim, D. & Ling, R. 2019. "Diffusion Of Disinformation: How Social Media Users Respond To Fake News And Why". *Journalism*, 21(3), 381-398. DOI:<https://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1464884919868325>
54. Tandoc, E. C. J., Lim, Z. W. & Ling, R. 2018. "Defining 'Fake News': A Typology of Scholarly Definitions". *Digital Journalism*, 6(2), 137-153. DOI:<https://dx.doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2017.1360143>
55. Trisliatanto, D. A. 2020. "Research Methodology: A Complete Guide to Research with Ease". Yogyakarta: ANDI Publisher.
56. Tsfaty, Y., Boomgaarden, H. G., Strömbäck, J., Vliegenthart, R., Damstra, A. & Kindgren, E. 2020. "Causes and Consequences of Mainstream Media Dissemination Of Fake News: Literature Review And Synthesis". *Annals of The International Communication Association*, 44(2), 157-173. DOI:<https://dx.doi.org/10.1080/23808985.2020.1759443>
57. Utami, P. 2019. "Hoax in Modern Politics". *Journal of Social Science and Political Science*, 22(2), 85-93. DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.22146/jsp.34614>
58. Vargo, C. J., Guo, L. & Amazeen, M. A. 2017. "The Agenda-Setting Power of Fake News: A Big Data Analysis of the Online Media Landscape from 2014 To 2016". *New Media & Society*, 20(5), 2028-2049. DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1461444817712086>
59. Waisbord, S. 2018. "Truth Is What Happens To News: On Journalism, Fake News, and Post-Truth". *Journalism Studies*, 19(13), 1866-1878. DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.1080/1461670X.2018.1492881>
60. Walter, N., Cohen, J., Holbert, R. L. & Morag, Y. 2019. "Fact-Checking: A Meta-Analysis of What Works and For Whom". *Political Communication*, 1-26. DOI:<https://doi.org/10.1080/10584609.2019.1668894>
61. Walter, N. & Murphy, S. T. 2018. "How to Unring the Bell: A Meta-Analytic Approach to Correction of Misinformation". *Communication Monographs*, 85(3), 423-441. DOI:<https://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03637751.2018.1467564>
62. Walter, N. & Tukachinsky, R. 2019. "A Meta-Analytic Examination of The Continued Influence of Misinformation In The Face Of Correction: How Powerful Is It, Why Does It Happen, And How To Stop It?". *Communication Research*, 36-50. DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0093650219854600>

Copyright © 2022 The author/s

This work is licensed under a CC-BY 3.0 license

(*) Corresponding author

Peer review method: Double-blind

Received: 10.04.2022

Accepted: 25.04.2022

Published: 14.06.2022

Original scientific article

DOI: <https://www.doi.org/10.47305/JLIA2282108n>


How to cite:


Naumovska, Bojana, and Milka Dimitrovska. 2022. "MACEDONIAN ELECTION RULES: CITIZENS VIS-À-VIS POLITICAL PARTIES". Journal of Liberty and International Affairs 8 (2):108-18. <https://e-jlia.com/index.php/jlia/article/view/601>.



MACEDONIAN ELECTION RULES: CITIZENS VIS-À-VIS POLITICAL PARTIES

Bojana Naumovska¹, Milka Dimitrovska^{2*}

¹Institute for Sociological, Political and Juridical Research, Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje, North Macedonia  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8371-1016> ✉ bojana@isppi.ukim.edu.mk

²Institute for Sociological, Political and Juridical Research, Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje, North Macedonia  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1612-8506> ✉ milka.dimitrovska@isppi.ukim.edu.mk

Abstract: *The Macedonian election rules, i.e. the setting of the electoral system, produce a double effect, an effect on the voter, and an effect on the party system. Therefore, each change in the electoral regulations would not only alter the voters' comportment but also impact the political parties. Considering these effects, the paper aimed to compare the attitudes of the citizens and political parties regarding the electoral legislature (both for the parliamentary and local elections); and produce adequate electoral solutions as a corrective for the detected shortcomings of the current regulations. The paper relied on content analysis of theoretical literature and research, empirical qualitative research based on citizens' focus groups from each region in Macedonia, questioned political parties, and additional data analysis. The ultimate findings propose a way to promote the equal value of each vote, proportional regional representation, and MPs' accountability at the parliamentary elections. For the local elections, the proposed solution referred to reducing the election cost, the possibility of political bargaining, and preserving the legitimacy of elected mayors.*

Keywords: *Electoral Regulations; Citizens; Political Parties; Parliamentary Elections; Local Elections*

INTRODUCTION

The electoral system is of exceptional significance for every state since it regulates the way citizens transfer their sovereignty and impacts the political structure within a given state.

The electoral regulation mainly delimited the possibility of voting for different options or voting for a smaller political party. Changes in these terms in the context of the Macedonian society would mean redistribution of forces in the national Assembly, i.e. greater participation of the smaller parties at the expense of the bigger ones. Although the Macedonian state, on numerous occasions, experienced changes in the electoral system directed towards larger inclusion of the citizens in the electoral process, more balanced representation of the ethnic communities, as well as towards reducing the number of lost votes, the evolutive process of finding the adequate electoral system is still open. The 20 year-practice of the proportional model with 6 constituencies, according to which seven voter turnouts have been organized in Macedonia, resulted in citizens' dissatisfaction with the overall political situation. Even though

the citizens' negative attitude concerning the electoral rules dominates and the wish for changes, consonance among the political parties will be lacking regarding the ensuing electoral model. Besides the differences between the citizens and political parties regarding the rules for parliamentary elections, there are differences concerning the local elections, especially related to the election of mayors. In this context, the paper aims to depict and compare the attitudes of the citizens and political parties regarding the electoral rules for parliamentary and local elections, which should result in novel electoral solutions. Such an approach focuses on the citizens' attitudes as sole carriers of sovereignty.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In a broader sense, the electoral system entails a compound of rules and procedures about the entirety of the electoral process, including the electoral right of the citizens, i.e. the entire electoral organization of the system (Karakamisheva 2004). As far as the narrower definition of the electoral system is concerned, it entails the process of transferring the electoral votes into mandates won through legally-regulated techniques and formulae. These rules influence the comportment of the voters and whether they would vote for a person or party.

The electoral systems produce a double effect on the voter and the party system. The latter defines how many political parties gain the status of legislative ones. These effects need to be gauged separately since the number of legislative parties does not derive only from the voters' decisions but from the manner of their transformation into parliamentary seats.

As a significant determinant of the electoral system, the party system represents the solid composition of political parties which compete in the elections. The system is characterized by the number of parties, the issues they advocate, and their similar forces (Bale 2009). The party system cannot be reduced only to the number and size of the political parties. However, it refers also to party interactions as the key element in explaining the position and role of the 'smaller' political parties. The position of the smaller political parties in a certain political system greatly depends upon the electoral model at play (Lijphart 1994).

Among the most important factors of the legal and political circumstances impacting the establishment, development, and entrance of the smaller parties in the representative house are the type of political system, population size, level of economic development of a state, electoral model, and satisfaction of the bigger parties (Horowitz and Browne 2005). Namely, the larger the size of the state's population and the higher its GDP is, the lesser the success of the smaller parties is. In contrast, the success of the smaller parties in the majority electoral systems directly correlates with the failure of the bigger parties. Also, the smaller parties have fewer success prospects than the bigger ones in a presidential system, where the focus is mainly directed toward a limited number of presidential candidates (Gerring 2005).

The proportional model ensures a higher level of representation of the smaller parties than the majority and the mixed ones. However, the electoral dimensions within the proportional model are influential in this sense. The size of the constituency and the level of the electoral threshold can produce effects of a majority system, even though the respective model is proportional (Naumovska 2011).

If the electoral system allows, the support of the smaller parties can be perceived as a 'venting' opportunity for the voters, through which they express their dissatisfaction with the bigger political parties. According to Belanger, mainly the old attitudes the voter had, lead to voting for smaller parties, while the newer attitudes of the voters can lead to voting abstinence (Belanger 2004).

A part of the electoral regulation reflects the way the citizens elect the local representatives in the local government, which is a form of governance in the local communities where the citizens, directly or through representative bodies and other local organs elected by the citizens, make decisions for the local interests and issues (Siljanovska-Davkova and Mitkov 2004). Concerning the local government organization, generally, three models can be identified: a model of a council, which presupposes the concentration of power in a collective body that can assign a mayor; a model of mayor-council, in which the power is divided between the mayor as the main executive and the elected council; and the model council-manager that presupposes assigning a professional city manager (Hague and Harrop 2007).

Despite being a proportional one, the current Macedonian electoral model does not ensure an entirely proportional distribution of the expressed will of the citizens, i.e. the number of the votes gained by the parties does not correspond with the distribution of mandates. Many lost votes and the different number of necessary votes to become a parliamentary representative directly consequences of the electoral system. Certainly, this situation negatively affects the number of political parties in the Assembly, meaning that it negatively affects the presence of the smaller political parties in it. Besides the dilemmas regarding the parliamentary elections, which generally refer to the number of constituencies (and subsequently the height of the electoral threshold), there are dilemmas regarding the number of election rounds for the election of mayors. The following text will elaborate on the citizens' attitudes and political parties respective to these issues with additional analyses to achieve the paper's aim.

DILEMMAS CONCERNING THE ELECTION OF PARLIAMENTARY REPRESENTATIVES

Proceeding the experience with the majority electoral model (elections 1990 and 1994) and the combined model (elections 1998), the last significant change is made for the elections in 2002, according to which the Macedonian parliamentary elections are organized per the proportional electoral model in 6 constituencies, with 20 parliamentary representatives elected from each constituency. Since the turnout in each constituency is different, this affects the number of necessary votes that should be won to become a member of the parliament. According to the data of the last elections (2020)¹, on average, in order to become a member of the parliament (MP) in the fourth constituency, it was necessary to win approximately 8500 votes (where the turnout is the biggest), while to become an MP from the sixth constituency, it was necessary to win around 6190 votes (where the turnout is the lowest). This situation of the unequal value of each vote represents one of the shortcomings of the current electoral model.

As well, the division of the territory into 6 constituencies does not ensure entirely equal representation of the political parties in the Macedonian Assembly, i.e. even though, on the

¹The basic data is gathered from the official site of the State Electoral Commission (<https://www.sec.mk/>). The calculations throughout the paper are attributed to the authors.

national level, a single political party can win more votes because of the distribution of the votes across constituencies, ultimately, it can win a disproportional number of parliamentary seats (at the last elections, this was the case with the political party Levica). This fact is also accentuated as a downside of the current electoral process.

Besides its direct influence on the number of political parties in the Assembly, this established model also affects the citizens' actions in the voting process.

To the end of overcoming the detected shortcomings, on many occasions, a procedure to change the parliamentary elections legislature has been initiated, which concerns the possible introduction of a single constituency (out of which all 120 parliamentary representatives would be elected) and the conditionally guaranteed mandates for the smaller ethnic communities (under 20%), while regarding the local elections, the requested changes refer to introduction of open lists for council elections and gender parity representation on the lists.

The Attitudes of the Citizens

Considering the citizens' satisfaction with their representatives in the Macedonian Assembly, according to the data of the research noted in acknowledgments: 'Views of citizens and political parties on the change of election rules', both in all constituencies and among all categories of citizens, there is a strong negative attitude and disappointment of the way the parliamentarians perform their function of representation of the citizens' interests. This attitude is argued by the citizens' numerous reasons and examples. Most of them consider that the MPs realize their own personal and party interests and receive excessive rewards for their engagement. They are predominantly loyal to the party leaders and do not realize the pre-election promises.

Box 1: Citizens' Statements (Source: Naumovska *et al.* 2022, 64)

"The least they do is represent the interests of the citizens. That is why I have not watched parliament broadcasts or debate shows for many years now. A complete disappointment in the election of MPs" (man, over the age of 65, Macedonian).

"They represent interests, but their interests, which are to win a 'tender here and a tender there'. Maybe they will do something, but for the citizens, 80-90% of them do not do anything. This is why all citizens are disappointed" (man, 50 to 65 years old, Macedonian).

"Before they become MPs, they visit the inhabited places, they promise everything, they pat you on the shoulder, let us win, then it is easy, once they win, we do not see them anymore. They put down roots there in Skopje; they get travel expenses, they fill their pockets with money, and they are just a voting machine, no matter which party they belong to" (man, 50 to 65 years old, Macedonian).

This is in line with the data from the research of public opinion conducted in 2021, according to which citizens think that the interest of the people is not at all in the focus of the MPs, while the party and personal interests dictate the MPs' actions. More concretely, 76% of the respondents state that the MPs always represent the interest of their political parties, 70% think that MPs represent their interests, and 57% consider that MPs represent someone's

business interest. At the bottom of the scale are the citizens' interests, for which 10% of the polled regard they are always represented by the MPs (Rechica and Jovevska-Gjorgjevik 2021). The same research provides the data that 65% of the respondents think that the MPs are not prepared to make decisions in the name of the citizens, as well as the data of exceptional significance for this paper, that around 60% of the respondents consider that the change of the electoral model for parliamentary elections would lead to a better quality composition of the Assembly.

More precisely, regarding the way MPs are elected, the attitude of the respondents of the research made by Naumovska *et al.* (2022) revolves around the strong stance that changes are necessary. There is general support for the equal value of each vote, leaving greater space for the smaller political parties and introducing a single constituency for the parliamentary elections, which would reduce the number of lost votes.

The respondents familiarized themselves with the possibility of changing the number of constituencies and thought that the bigger parties (VMRO-DPMNE, SDSM, and DUI) would not support the change because it is unfavorable.

Box 2: Citizens' Statements (Source: Naumovska *et al.* 2022, 65)

"If votes are lost, why would we vote if our vote is worth nothing" (woman, up to 29 years old, Macedonian).

"They only see the party's interest and not the interest of the country" (man, 50-56 years old, Turk).

"With a single constituency with more participants in the government coalition, I think the Government will be more controlled by the smaller political parties so that the big ones will not have the luxury of doing what they want, in the classic sense of the word" (man, 30-40 years old, Albanian).

The Views of the Political Parties

Considering the views of the political parties regarding the change in the number of constituencies, out of 14 political parties inquired, 9 of them advocate or support the changes of the electoral model in the direction of introducing a single constituency. This group of parties comprises SDSM, LDP, Democratic Alliance, Integra, YOUR party, POEN, DOM, Alliance of Roma in Macedonia, and Democratic Party of the Turks in Macedonia. The accentuated arguments pro this change are the equal value of each vote, distribution of mandates proportional to the votes won, which means a realistic reflection of the citizens' affinities; equal opportunities for all parties; and create opportunities for new political ideologies. SDSM emphasizes that the reforms should be made with a consensus on this issue (Naumovska *et al.* 2022, 54).

The Albanian parties have various preferences. The Movement BESA states that it would be most appropriate if the Macedonian territory were organized into 3 constituencies. For the Alliance of Albanians, the adequate solutions would be 8 constituencies. At the same time, Alternative has not expressed a clear perspective on the matter, i.e. considers that the electoral model should "depict the reality and justice for every ethnic or political community" (Naumovska

et al. 2022, 54). According to DUI, the option for a single constituency is unacceptable because, allegedly, it would diminish the possibility of representing all smaller areas which would mean passing laws that are not in the interest of all. This change would mean diminishing the possibility of establishing and functioning a stable government.

According to the respondent from VMRO-DPMNE, a single constituency with a threshold would be acceptable, meaning the equal value of each vote and a stable Assembly. An alternative would be a majority model with 120 constituencies. Although at the time of conducting this research, the attitude quoted is personal, at the time-point of writing this paper, VMRO-DPMNE as a political party stands behind the concept of introducing a single constituency but conditioning this act with the organization of early parliamentary elections (Naumovska *et al.* 2022, 54).

Even though the party Levica did not participate in the research, this party is pro introducing a single constituency on the entire Macedonian territory. It was an initiator of the Draft Law on Amending the Electoral Code (2021). Although the citizens' attitudes are in line with the views of the political parties regarding the change of the legislature for parliamentary elections, the support of the bigger parties is conditioned (to reach a consensus - SDSM/to organize early elections - VMRO-DPMNE). Additionally, neither party of the Albanian block supports the introduction of a single constituency.

DILEMMAS REGARDING THE ELECTION OF MAYORS

As far as the local government is concerned, the state's territory is divided into 80 municipalities, and the City of Skopje and the election of mayors is realized in two rounds. For a candidate to be elected as a mayor in the first round, he must win at least half of the turnout votes if (cumulatively) a minimum of one-third of the total number of voters have exited the polls. Suppose neither of the candidates has won the necessary majority. In that case, the second round of elections is organized in which only the first two candidates have won the most votes in the first round. At the same time, the elected mayor is considered the one who was winning the majority vote, regardless of the turnout in the second round, i.e. the census is not determined in the latter instance. The dilemma referring to the local elections, which was posed as a question both before the citizens - participants in the research, and the political parties, is: in how many rounds a mayor should be elected, taking into consideration the cost of the elections, the political bargaining and the legitimacy of the future mayors.

The Attitudes of the Citizens

Faced with the information that if the election of mayors is organized in a single round, the elections would cost much less, and the possibility for political bargaining would be diminished, the citizens participating in the focus groups significantly supported the idea of reform towards a single election round for mayors. Many of the respondents accentuate the economic benefit of this endeavor and the harm of the phenomenon of political bargaining between the two rounds.

Box 3: Citizens' Statements (Source: Naumovska *et al.* 2022, 67)

"I think that in many aspects, it is better to go with one election round. From an economic point of view, it would be cheaper, and in terms of quality, nothing will change, and the result will not change at all. There are very small chances that something will change in the second round" (man, 50-65 years old, Turk).

"I favor one round. Whoever is good should be elected on time. Let's go with one round. No bargaining after that round" (man, over the age of 65, Albanian).

The Views of the Political Parties

Regarding the elections of mayors, the dominant stance among the political parties is that this process should continue to be organized in two rounds. With the current principle, 10 out of 14 parties are concordant (LDP, DOM, DS, DUI, BESA, AA, Alternative, DPTM, SRM, and POEN). The prevailing argumentation is based on the importance of the number of individual votes representing a democratic achievement. The larger civil inclusion in the process is far more substantial than the financial cost. The parties also emphasize the legitimacy of the mayors that would be challenged if the elections were organized in a single round (Naumovska *et al.* 2022, 60-61).

According to SDSM, even though the second round provides additional legitimacy to the elected mayors, it is open to a dialogue on this issue.

The remaining three political parties (VMRO-DPMNE, YOUR party, and Integra) support the introduction of a single round of election of mayors, accompanied by the main argumentation that the political bargaining would be avoided in such a way well it would cost less (Naumovska *et al.* 2022, 60-61).

ADDITIONAL ANALYSIS

Additional analysis is made for the election results from the local elections in 2017 and 2021 between the first and the second round. The analysis entails determining the number of municipalities in which the second round of elections have been organized, whose candidates have been first-ranked, to pronounce the changes from the votes won in the two rounds, and which final results are obtained.

At the local elections in 2017, out of 80 municipalities, the second round took place in 35 of them. Regarding the ranking in the first round, in 25 of these municipalities that organized the second round, the candidates who had won the most votes in the first round became mayors. In the remaining 10 municipalities, in 3 of them, the overturn was in favor of the AA, in 1 in favor of BESA, while in 5 municipalities in favor of the governing party SDSM. The party DUI made an overturn only in Struga. In the second round, VMRO-DPMNE won only 2 mayor offices, SDSM - 19 (it did not lose in any municipality where its candidate had been ranked as first and additionally made an overturn in 5 other municipalities), DUI won 8 municipalities, although in the first round it led in 11.

According to the summarized data from the two rounds, the coalition led by SDSM won the local elections with 57 mayors elected, including the City of Skopje. The coalition led by

VMRO-DPMNE won 5 mayors' seats, DUI-10, AA that for the first time competed at the local elections as a separate party, won 3 mayors' seats, BESA, DPA, and DPT each won 1 mayor. In comparison, 3 mayors' seats were won by independent candidates (Pankovski *et al.* 2021). The turnout at these elections was 60% in the first turn and 52% in the second.

At the local elections held in 2021, 43 municipalities and the City of Skopje were voted in the second round. The first-ranked candidates became mayors in 30 municipalities and the City of Skopje. In comparison, overturn was made in 13 municipalities. In 4, the difference between the candidates in the first round had been less than 100 votes (in the municipalities of Demir Hisar, Makedonska Kamenica, Pehchevo, and Chucher Sandevo).

Out of the municipalities in which an overturn took place in the second round in favor of SDSM were only the results of the Municipality of Chucher Sandevo, where the candidate of a group of voters was beaten. In favor of DUI are detected only the results of the Municipality of Kichevo, where the candidate of VMRO-DPMNE was beaten. VMRO DPMNE made an overturn in the municipalities of Demir Hisar, Konche, Lozovo, Makedonska Kamenica, Pehchevo, Kochani, and Resen. At the expense of the well-positioned DUI, the Movement BESA made an overturn in Zhelino and Tetovo. The party GROM candidate made an overturn in the Municipality of Karposh, and the candidate of LDP/DOM in the Municipality of Shuto Orizari.

According to the summarized data, the party VRMO-DPMNE won 42 mayors, SDSM – 16, DUI-11, BESA-2, AA, and Alternative won in 2 municipalities, while DPA, GROM, and LDP/DOM each won 1 mayor. Independent candidates became mayors in the City of Skopje, Kumanovo, and Debrca. The turnout at these elections in the first round was 51.44%, while in the second round, 49.65%. Generally, the diminished turnout was due to the voting in the City of Skopje because out of 10 municipalities in total, second-round elections were held only in 4 (the turnout at a city level is 49,23%, while in the second round (46,49%). In the municipalities where an overturn took place in the second round, a diminished turnout was noted only in the Municipality of Shuto Orizari. The biggest differences referring to the number of votes won in the second round (compared to the first one) by the mayoral candidates are noted in Tetovo (Kasami won additional 11000 votes), in Kumanovo (Dimitrievski won additional 10400 votes), and in Karposh (Jakimovski won additional 8000 votes).

From the elaborated data, it can be extrapolated that the citizens' dominant stance is that the local elections should be realized in a single round, thus diminishing the political bargaining and the cost of the elections, while among the political parties, the prevailing view is that the elections should be held in two rounds, by which the elected mayors gain greater legitimacy. According to the additional analysis results, an overturn occurs in a lesser number of municipalities. In the context of the overall political milieu, it can be presupposed that this results from dissatisfaction with the governance, mostly on the central (national) level.

CONCLUSION

As a result of the detected shortcomings of the current model of parliamentary elections (equal value of each vote, opportunity for voting for a smaller party in circumstances when the vote would not be lost, accountable MPs who would promote the interests of the citizens), as well as a result of the views of the parties (equal value of each vote, distribution of mandates according to the votes won, adequate regional representation), the authors consider that the adequate model with which introduction these downsides can be overcome in Macedonia, is the German electoral model. Due to its proportional dimension, this combined model guarantees equality of each vote, provides the possibility to vote for a smaller party, and adequately distributes the mandates. In contrast, the inclusion of the majority model ensures regional representation and greater accountability of the MPs before the citizens.

Regarding the local elections, to reduce the cost of the elections and the possibility for political bargaining but to preserve the legitimacy of the elected mayors, the authors recommend introducing the system of an additional vote. By this, the voters would have the opportunity to denote another candidate besides voting for their first-choice candidate if their first choice fails to enter the run in the second round.

COMPLIANCE WITH ETHICAL STANDARDS

Acknowledgments:

This paper is largely based on the data acquired through the research 'Views of citizens and political parties on the change of election rules', conducted by the Institute for Sociological, Political and Juridical Research - UKIM in cooperation and supported by the NDI and as part of the issue North Macedonia's Election System: How to Ensure Fair Representation in Parliament (referenced in the paper). The empirical findings were derived from focus groups with citizens from all Macedonian regions with regards to distribution, age, gender, ethnicity, and education. A questionnaire was delivered to 18 parties and was answered by 14 of them. In this process, the lead researcher was Dr. Bojana Naumovska. The research team this acknowledgment pertains to consisted of Dr. Aneta Cekikj, Dr. Jovan Bliznakovski, and Milka Dimitrovska, LL.M.

Funding:

NDI supported a great deal in the acquiring of empirical data.

Statement of human rights:

All procedures performed in studies involving human participants were following the ethical standards of the institutional and/or national research committee and with the Declaration of Helsinki and its later amendments or comparable ethical standards.

Statement on the welfare of animals:

This article does not contain any studies with animals performed by any authors.

Informed consent:

Not applicable.

REFERENCES

1. Bale, Tim. 2005. "European Politics: A Comparative Introduction". *Red Globe Press*.
2. Belanger, Eric. 2004. "Antipartyism and Third-Party Vote Choice: A Comparison of Canada, Britain, and Australia". *Comparative Political Studies* 37(9):1054-78.
3. Gerring, John. 2005. "Minor parties in plurality electoral systems". *Party Politics* 11(1): 79-107. SAGE Publications.
4. Hague, Rod and Martin Harrop. 2007. "Comparative Government and Politics". England: Palgrave Macmillan.
5. Horowitz, Shale; and Eric C. Browne. 2005. "Sources of Post-Communist Party System Consolidation: Ideology versus Institutions". *Party Politics* 11(6): 689-706. SAGE Publications, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1177/1354068805057605>
6. Karakamisheva, Tanja. 2004. "Elections and Electoral Systems". Skopje: Kultura. [Каракамисева, Тања. 2004. *Избори и изборни системи*. Скопје: Култура].
7. Lijphart, Arendt. 1994. "Electoral Systems and Party Systems". Oxford University Press.
8. Naumovska, Bojana. 2011. "The Influence of the Electoral Models on the Smaller Political Parties in the Republic of Macedonia". PhD diss., Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje.
9. Naumovska, Bojana; Cekikj, Aneta; Bliznakovski, Jovan and Milka Dimitrovska. 2022. "Views of Citizens and Political Parties on the Change of Election Rules." In *North Macedonia's Election System: How to Ensure Fair Representation in Parliament*, Skopje: NDI.
10. Pankovski, Marko; Mihajlovski, Nikola; Naskova, Iva and Zdravko Stavrov. 2021. "Manual for Local Elections in the Republic of North Macedonia 2021". Skopje: Konrad Adenauer Stiftung in Republic of North Macedonia and Institute for Democracy Societas Civilis. [Панковски, Марко; Михајловски, Никола; Наскова, Ива и Здравко Ставров. 2021. "Прирачник за локални избори во Република Северна Македонија 2021 година". Скопје: Фондација Конрад Аденауер во Република Северна Македонија и Институт за демократија „Социетас Цивилис“].
11. Rechica, Vlora and Aleksandra Jovevska Gjorgjevikj. 2021. "An Assembly Overview: Results of Field Survey on the Citizens' Perceptions on the Work of the Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia (17 February-10 March 2021)". Skopje: Institute for Democracy Societas Civilis.
12. Siljanovska-Davkova, Gordana and Vladimir Mitkov. 2004. "Local Self-government". Skopje: Magor. [Силјановска-Давкова, Гордана и Владимир Митков. 2004. *Локална самоуправа*. Скопје: Магор].
13. State Election Commission. 2022. available at: <https://www.sec.mk> (15 May 2021).

Copyright © 2022 The author/s
This work is licensed under a CC-BY 3.0 license
(*) Corresponding author
Peer review method: Double-blind
Received: 28.02.2022
Accepted: 25.03.2022
Published: 14.06.2022
Original scientific article
DOI: <https://www.doi.org/10.47305/JLIA2282119k>


How to cite:


Kosho, Joana, and Elda Zotaj. 2022. "THE INCLUSION AND EXCLUSION OF CITIZENS IN THE EUROINTEGRATION PROCESS OF ALBANIA".
Journal of Liberty and International Affairs 8 (2):119-35. <https://e-jlia.com/index.php/jlia/article/view/602>.



THE INCLUSION AND EXCLUSION OF CITIZENS IN THE EUROINTEGRATION PROCESS OF ALBANIA

Joana Kosho¹, Elda Zotaj^{2*}

¹Aleksandër Xhuvani University of Elbasan, Albania  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6097-8612> ✉ joana.kosho@uniel.edu.al

²Aleksandër Moisiu University of Durrës, Albania  <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0488-9700> ✉ eldazotaj@yahoo.com

Abstract: *Albania's national interest is the integration into the European Union. To fulfill this objective, every state component, public institutions, civil society, the media, and the citizens, play a very important role. The main focus of this paper is the public sphere, the attitudes of Albanian citizens toward the EU membership, and their role in the process. By applying qualitative and quantitative methods, the main theories of the field, global and regional indexes, studies, surveys, interviews, and personal observations, we aim to focus on the citizens' attitudes toward the EU membership process. Our in-depth analyses have shown that the Albanian institutions, CSOs, and media to inform and include the citizens in the Europeanization process have not been effective enough. Thus, there is a knowledge gap between sensitive groups and the other part of society.*

Keywords: *European Integration; Public Sphere; Public Opinion; Inclusion; Albanian Citizens*

INTRODUCTION

The role of the public during the eurointegration process is crucial and underrated at the same time. Because at the core of the European Union (EU) are the fundamental rights, such as peace, security, and prosperity, one of the objectives of this process is to guarantee the wellbeing, the freedoms, and rights of its citizens, including those nations that are potential candidates for membership. For this reason, studying the public opinion attitudes toward the European policies has enormous importance in the frame of the future enlargements of the Union, when for every new member or a new exit from the EU, there are the citizens that give the final verdict through the referendums.

In Albania, a public sphere exists, although not a very consolidated one, which has its beginnings since the fall of communism in the 90s. Currently, this public sphere enables the free exchange of ideas and gives life to independent and responsible media, a healthy and reliable civil society, and informed and socially active citizens. Meanwhile, the Albanian institutions have to be very careful to fully integrate the Albanian public sphere in decision-making to fulfill the Copenhagen criteria better.

At this point, the attitude of the Albanian citizens towards European integration is a very important component to be measured, analyzed, and compared in the frame of the national agenda for EU membership. Even though the Albanian public sphere is not fully consolidated, there must be admitted that it provides coherent and enthusiastic support compared with the support that the public in Albania has for the EU integration.

Since creating the democratic and independent public sphere in Albania, this support has been significant, especially if we compare the public opinion attitudes in the neighboring countries, which are also potential candidates for EU membership. Been measured and analyzed for more than two decades, the public opinion support for the EU integration has not reached levels under 80%, giving us an important clue that the Albanian citizens have an enormous trust in the European institutions and in the Union itself, and that they do expect benefits from the membership. The Albanian citizen's expectations from the EU membership are reinforcing law, economic prosperity, and the freedom to study, travel and work in the EU. All the analytical data from the surveys conducted during the last two decades have shown that the Albanian expectations of the EU membership are quite unreal. This unrealistic point of view is related to the education and the information gap, the economic level, and the insufficient inclusion of the Albanian citizens in the eurointegration processes.

This paper, focusing on the public opinion attitudes toward the eurointegration, compares the analytical data from many studies in the field by using global and regional indexes, surveys, interviews, and personal observations and aims to show the existing gap of knowledge among the Albanian citizens about EU membership, the lack of the national platforms implemented from the institutions and especially the marginalization of the sensitive groups, in the frame of the eurointegration process.

METHODOLOGY

This paper applies a mixed methodology, combining qualitative and quantitative research. In this study, we have used both the qualitative approach, including contextual understanding like interviews and surveys or observations, along with facts or statistics of the quantitative research. An important part of the methodology has been comparing the annual qualitative reports such as the Standard Eurobarometer, Balkan Barometer, or other important studies that measure the perceptions of the Albanian citizens as effective leverage to show the importance of the public support for the eurointegration process.

One of the main theories used in this research is the 'public sphere'. The public sphere is where civil society can connect with the state's power structure. Habermas has elaborated on this idea in his 1962 book 'The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere'. In Habermas's characterization, the public sphere can best be described as a network of communicating information and points of view (Habermas, *Between Facts and Norms* 1996, 360). The public sphere is seen as a domain of social life where public opinion can be formed.

This sphere is open to all citizens and constituted in every conversation in which individuals come together to form a public (Habermas 1991). In Habermas's view, the idea of the public sphere is the space in which citizens deliberate about their common affairs, hence, an institutionalized arena of discursive interaction (Fraser 1992, 57). An effective and active public

sphere is not possible if there is no significant participation of key factors such as the CSOs (Civil Society Organizations) and the media. In order to further elaborate on the connections between the citizens, the CSOs, and the media, we used another source of knowledge as, Jeffrey C. Alexander's book 'The Civil Sphere' (Oxford University Press 2006). In this book, the author underlined the importance of social relationships and how they are broadcasted by civil society institutions specializing in communicative, not regulative, tasks-by the mass media, public opinion polls, and voluntary organizations. The author tries to build a model that defines the relationship between civil society and other kinds of institutional spheres.

To make possible the existence of the public sphere, the European processes have to be visible to citizens. For this to be a reality, the mainstream media's role in making the EU visible is crucial (Salvatore, Schmidtke, and Trenz 2013, 142). Analyzing the connection between media and the public sphere, Machill, Risse, De Vreese, and Boomgaarden have defined that the media's role in the Europeanisation of the EU public sphere and the Member States is vital. Covering the eurointegration process news is very important, considering the powerful impact that media has on the public support for the EU (De Vreese, Boomgaarden 2006, 419-436).

It is also important to include the main concepts of the 'Knowledge Gap' theory, as a communication theory proposed in the 1970s by Philip J. Tichenor, George A. Donohue, and Clarice N. Olien (1970, 159-170). This theory is primarily focused on the information gap that exists within society. The theory proposes that "as the infusion of mass media information into social system increases, the higher socio-economic status segments tend to acquire this information faster than lower socio-economic status population segments. Hence the gap in knowledge between the two tends to increase rather than decrease" (Communication Theory 2019). The 'Knowledge Gap' theory is applied in this paper to make evident the educational, economic, and knowledge gap in Albanian society and the exclusion of marginalized groups such as women, people with disabilities, LGBT and Roma communities, etc.

The Role of the Institutions and Media

There is a complex chain of institutions, organizations, and bodies that coordinate, promote and make visible the European process in a candidate country for EU membership. It is important to highlight their functions and their role in this process.

Albanian institutions: At this point of the process, the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs is the coordinator of the process of Albania's integration into the European Union, and consequently, it is the institution in charge of coordinating and leading the process with all other accountable institutions part of the eurointegration process. Albanian governmental institutions have made some efforts to implement the national policy documents, such as the National Plan for European Integration (NPEI). In April 2019, the government approved the updated biannual NPEI for 2019-2021 (Council of Ministers 2020).

Through a study conducted by Madhi and Sopoti (2020), the European Integration Partnership Platform has noted a lack of the right information from the Albanian institutions. The institutions do not have an approved communication plan to set out the respective rules. Institutions have chosen to publish the events on their official websites. They include them in other sections, thus making it difficult for organizations/individuals interested in participating in

these roundtables to find the announcements. So practically, organizations/individuals need to be well informed about the process to be able to follow these announcements. Despite a communication plan to ensure adequate information coverage of all actors involved in this process, such a plan is hardly felt (Madhi and Sopoti 2020).

In this case, the study sample included three groups from civil society, with 104 questionnaires completed, out of which 84% were from civil society organizations, 12% from business organizations, and 4% from media. Asked if they were aware of a communication strategy by the Albanian government for the process of Albania's integration into the EU, more than half (55.8%) stated that they were not aware. In comparison, 29.8% of them stated that there is a communication strategy, and about 9% stated that there is no communication strategy. A very high rate had no information, bringing to attention the lack of promotion of the process by institutions (Madhi and Sopoti 2020, 48).

Another study, conducted by Elda Zotaj and Gentiana Madhi in December 2019, supported by the 'Streha' Center and the European Commission, focused on the Albanian citizens' perceptions of the European process and the human rights in Albania. In the framework of this study, a sample of citizens and CSOs in Albania has been asked 'if the Albanian government has a communication strategy for eurointegration. After collecting and analyzing the data, the authors concluded that 70% of the respondents admitted there is no such document, and 30% did not have any information about an institutional communication strategy. According to Alba Brokaj (2019), "the absence of a strategy for the communication in the frame of the eurointegration, not only does undermine the government job, because the reforms and the events do not reach the citizens as a pure, balanced and as an apolitical information, but also undermines the work that will be done in the future because a citizen not informed will not be an active citizen in the decision-making". The absence of this strategy creates a knowledge gap in the information process, making the citizens indifferent and disinterested in the eurointegration process. They also admit that the majority of the Albanian citizens have no information at all about the key documents that define the way of the European integration of our country (Zotaj and Madhi 2019, 52).

Civil Society: More than 7,600 non-profit organizations are registered in Albania, yet their high number does not guarantee their impact on important processes in Albania. This is significantly evident in the case of Albania, where their engagement in decision-making and the monitoring of the policy-making processes is not yet fulfilled. One of the main structures relevant to reaching this priority in Albania is the National Council for Civil Society, established in 2015, which has a consultative role and aims to offer the space for dialogue among the CSOs and state institutions regarding topics of interest and reforms are undertaken by the government. Another structure established to include the civil society and non-state actors in policy-making is the National Council for European Integration (NCEI) which plays the role of the highest national advisory structure for the eurointegration of the Albanian Assembly. This Council promotes and guarantees the comprehensive cooperation between political forces, public institutions, and civil society; and ensures increased transparency in decision-making on integration issues as stipulated by Law 15/2015. When it comes to the eurointegration process, the local communities, including local CSOs and local government, face the challenge of not

being properly and fully informed. This makes it difficult and almost impossible for the mentioned actors to be engaged and contribute to this process (EMA 2020, 04-06).

Considering the most recent data, the Progress Report for Albania (2021) concludes that limited progress has been made in implementing the roadmap to an enabling environment for civil society. On the other hand, adopting the law on the registration of non-profit organizations brings some improvements.

It is important to emphasize that the National Council for Civil Society remains not a very stable one. There is an urgent need for this Council to be reformed to provide the appropriate representation of the Albanian civil society. Moreover, substantial efforts are necessary when developing meaningful and systematic consultations with civil society as part of inclusive policy dialogue for reforms.

When it comes to the legal aspects, the law on the National Council has not been amended. It does not reflect the necessary changes in ministerial portfolios and representation in the Council and improves its functioning. The Agency for the Support of Civil Society remains the main public body providing financial support for civil society. However, its budget was reduced by 40% in 2020, making public funding insufficient to sustain CSOs' activity, particularly in social services (European Commission Report 2021, 13).

The study 'Civil Society and Albania's EU Integration Process', supported by the European Commission, AIEN, and Partners Albania for Change and Development (Madhi and Sopoti 2020), highlighted the important role of the CSOs in the eurointegration process of the country. According to the authors, CSOs do not often actively participate in or contribute to the European Union accession negotiation process. Their rather passive role is caused by irregular feedback from national authorities and neglect of CSOs' contribution, an overall lack of transparency, an absence of trust in the established platforms for CSO participation, and a perceived lack of expertise in certain areas. An additional issue to be addressed is the inadequate and insufficient information provided to citizens, for which both national authorities and CSOs are responsible. In this study, Madhi and Sopoti (2020) have attempted to categorize the CSOs that operate in Albania. The least common fields of activity are International Relations and European Scientific Integration in only 12% of cases. The geographical area of the organizations' activity is considered an important indicator of the potential of organizations to be key actors in important processes such as eurointegration. More than half of them (53.8%) state that the geographical area of their activity is national, followed by 28% of organizations declaring local, 16.3% regional, and only 2% European. This clearly shows the potential of civil society organizations to contribute to Albania's EU integration process. It is already evident that CSOs play an important role in the eurointegration process of Albania. They are represented as partners and/or contributors to the EU agenda and strong implementers of key policies and strategies. To assess the capacities of CSOs, respondents were asked about the role of civil society in this process. More than half of the respondents (58.7%) stated that they perceive the role of CSOs in informing and raising public awareness regarding the membership process and 28.8% in providing expertise according to the respective field of expertise.

Meanwhile, it is worth noting that only 12.5% of them report that they perceive the role of CSOs in monitoring the harmonization of the Albanian legislation and public policies with the EU (Madhi and Sopoti 2020, 44).

Media: Many recent studies have shown that media has an enormous impact on public opinion, and they do contribute to the formation of public perceptions regarding political, economic, or social issues. Mass media have been identified as very important when linking EU politics to its citizens (Adam 2009, 6). The way the news is covered and served to the citizens, the sources involved, or the language used to describe what has happened affects how this news is decoded or understood by the mass and can also affect their feedback.

While information is an important tool that helps shape opinions, the source of information plays a major role in interpreting that information. The Balkan Barometer is an annual survey of public opinion and business sentiments in six Western Balkan economies commissioned by the Regional Cooperation Council. The survey analyzes the aspirations and expectations on life and work, prevalent socio-economic and political trends, and regional and eurointegration¹. Based on Balkan Barometer (June 2021) for the public opinion, in the Western Balkan economies, there is a similar attitude towards accessing information, with an above-average level of residents acquiring information through local media.

Specifically, in Albania, 78% of the entire population uses media as a channel for creating an opinion, while 42% shape their opinion based on information through friends and family. Interestingly enough, social media represent another channel widely used by participants (31%), while only 24% claim to take a certain attitude only if they are informed by governmental communications (Balkan Barometer 2021).

In this regard, the Albanian Institute for International Studies surveyed in the spring of 2020 to measure the public opinion support for the integration process. Citizens have been asked to self-evaluate their information about the EU and the eurointegration process and identify their information sources. Slightly more than half of them (53%) say they feel averagely informed about EU and integration, whereas 23% feel that there is a lack of information. On the other side, a similar group of 22% feels quite well informed about it. TV continues to be on top of the list of information sources, with a full third of the sample using TV news and programs to be informed about the EU and the process of integrating Albania and the region. This is followed by the Internet, which has been gaining prominence year by year and now stands as the primary source for 26% of Albanians, primarily young. Conversations with friends are the way to be informed for 10% of the sample, and newspapers are the 'go-to' source for another tenth of them. Various publications of civil society organizations and the events of the EU Delegation in Albania stand for about 5% each (AIIS 2020, 15-16).

When considering the data received from the monitoring process of the visual media (Albanian TV channels: Top Channel, Klan TV, and Vision Plus) for the period September-November 2021, it is generally seen that the European themes, events, or issues are not covered deeply enough by the respective media. There are not enough news chronicles about the eurointegration process, nor in number or diversity. The Albanian media carefully covers the events, the visits of high officials, or EU delegations. However, there is no further explanation of some complicated notions or the EU process per se for those citizens who do not have deep knowledge of the terminology related to the process. Headlines like: "The negotiations, at the end of the year/Von der Leyen in Tirana: The Open Balkan is welcomed", (Vision Plus 18 September 2021); "The BE-Western Balkans Summit/Rama for the Spanish "El País: We don't

¹ See more at: <https://www.rcc.int/balkanbarometer/about>

expect anything from the European Union" (Top Channel 6 October 2021); "Rama: EU should be ashamed for holding us hostage" (Klan TV 25 October), show that the Albanian TV channels are just covering the events, but do not explain or go deep enough in the core of the Europeanization processes, to reflect, discuss and evaluate the positive or negative effects of the eurointegration in our economy or finances. We came to the same conclusion from the monitoring of the news agencies (Albanian News Agency and Balkan Web), highlighting some headlines such as: "PM Rama for RTVE: Europe is our faith and future in EU is our free choice", (ATA 10 October), or "EU-Western Balkans, the Voice of America: We are engaged for the expansion, but there are no deadlines" (Balkan Web 7 October).

The data collected from monitoring some Albanian newspapers (Panorama and Gazeta Shqiptare) in the same period (September-November 2021) showed that the eurointegration process is covered better than the TV channels, including in-depth interviews, commentaries, interviews, and analyses. For example, headlines such as "EU increases the hopes of Tirana and Skopje for the negotiation process/The experts: good signals from the Biden Administration" (Panorama 3 October 2021), or "Albania deserves the negotiation process, but the corruption is still a problem" (Gazeta Shqiptare 20 October), do show that the newspapers have the space and the possibility to cover the themes and events about the eurointegration widely. In general, the Albanian media are not careful and dedicated to covering reports and analyzing the news about specific issues according to the benefits and costs of the Europeanization process. In most of the reports, we can see that the media cover the events; they just describe what happened, who said this, or that but rarely explain the facts or analyze the steps Albania is taking in its long and challenging path to the EU.

The Attitudes of the Albanian Citizens about the Eurointegration Process

The Albanian Institute for International Studies (AIIS) has been measuring the support for the eurointegration process since 2003. Hence some lines of comparisons through the years should be drawn to complete a panorama of developments in perceptions.

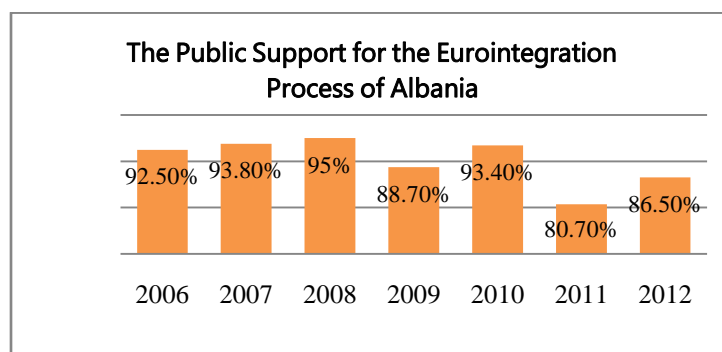


Figure 1: The Public Support for the Eurointegration Process of Albania (2003-2012)
(Source: AIIS: Perceptions and Realities 2012, 10)

Figure 1 shows that support for Albania's membership in the EU has remained high. Since the first measurement of the perceptions about the eurointegration in 2003, Albanians' support for the EU has never reached below 80%.

The explanation and interpretation of this kind of support must be made beyond academic/scientific curiosity. The following are a few arguments given by the experts of the Albanian Institute for International Studies and could explain somehow this consistent high support in Albania: first and foremost, the political spectrum in Albania does not include any party, organization, or influential individual that has been against the membership project even as critical voices have risen in the last few years. In her study 'Political Parties Attitude, Voter Trust and EU Integration: Albanian Case', Bërdufi highlights the Albanian political parties' support for the eurointegration process. A survey conducted in 2014 showed high public support for the EU integration from the Albanian political parties: PD, 93.3%, PS, 93.4%, and LSI, 93.4%. The other smaller parties (coalition parties) have fewer high levels of support PBDNJ 73.40%, PDIU 66.70%, PKDSH 57.10%, PR 80.00%. Overall, these political parties support the EU integration in their public stance (Bërdufi 2019, 321). General criticism has been mostly related to the process of integration rather than directed at the EU or the perspective of being in the EU itself. Second, the expectation about the benefits that Albanians link to EU membership is quite high and often unrealistic. However, they provide powerful incentives for support.

Moreover, the membership itself in the EU could signify the end of the post-communist transition from a social perspective. The almost unanimous vote of Albanians for membership in the EU could also be related to the political culture of a society, which is used to being afraid to declare what it thinks openly, and especially, could be afraid to speak against what both the government and opposition say, along with the media, NGO's, etc. Finally, support at such a large scale is also related to the glorification of the West, the mystification of the West in general, and Europe in particular (AIIS 2012, 13-14).

In their study about citizens' attitudes toward EU membership, Peshkopia, Arifi, and Sheqiri (2020) have concluded that the Albanians' support for EU integration remains very high. The authors test their argument with public opinion data collected in the summer of 2017 in Albania and Kosovo. According to the results of the abovementioned study, there is strong support for EU membership among citizens of Albania and Kosovo, with respectively 81.58% and 83.86% of respondents combining much and very much support (Peshkopia, Arifi, Sheqiri 2020, 459). Very high support for the EU membership from a candidate country such as Albania was also recorded from the Standard Eurobarometer (summer 2018). According to the data collected from this report, the EU membership support is quite high in Albania, where most respondents (93%) believe that the EU membership is a good thing for their country (EB90 2018, 78).

During the period 2018-2021, the Balkan Barometer data reveals that the public opinion support in Albania for the EU integration remains high and stable in its trend. On the question about the meaning of the EU membership for the citizens personally, the Albanian respondents are primarily associated with economic prosperity (respectively, 49% in 2018, 62% in 2019, 59% in 2020, and 66% in 2021), freedom to study and/or work in EU (respectively, 47% in 2018, 29% in 2019, 60% in 2020 and 63% in 2021), and freedom to travel (respectively 19% in 2018, 20% in 2019, 21% in 2020 and 57% in 2021).

In the last two years, we have seen an increasing trend in the need for Albanian citizens to work and travel in the EU countries (Balkan Barometer: 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021).

According to the survey conducted by the Albanian Institute for International Studies (June 2020), when been asked how important this process is for them, almost 60% of Albanian citizens, a significant majority, responded that it is very important, followed by 32% who admitted that it is important. Only 6% did not consider this an important process. These data are a clear indicator that almost all the society assigns key significance to the developments related to the European perspective of the country (AIIS 2020, 3-5) (Figure 2).

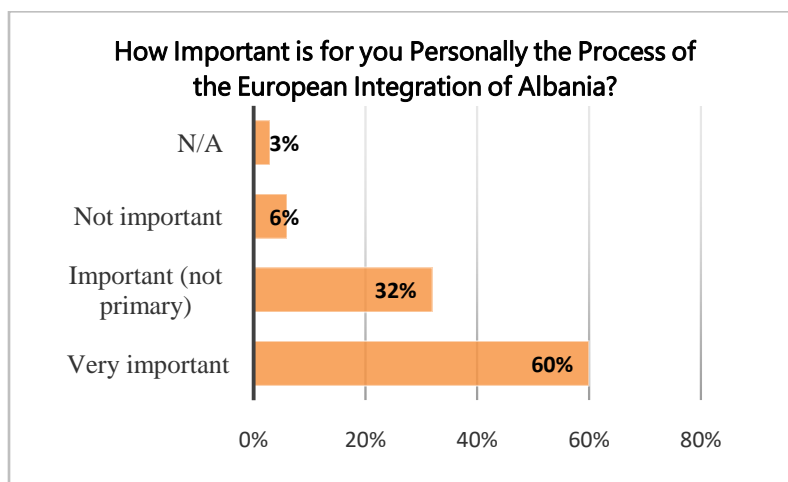


Figure 2: The Albanian Public Support for the European Integration (Source: AIIS 2020)

In the case of a referendum, it is more than evident that an overwhelming majority of 86% of Albanians would vote 'Yes' for their country's accession to the EU. In contrast, a very small minority of just 7% would vote against it. It is comforting that most Albanian citizens back the reforms and consider this perspective unrivaled. However, when it comes to concrete and detailed understating and expectations about the process, the support seems to be based partially on some lack of real information, which raises doubts. According to the AIIS, the reasons why so many Albanians support EU integration remain unchanged over time pertain to the expected rise in living standards. The economic justification of their choice for citizens has always been the first reason for the hypothetical positive vote for accession. Recently, about 40 percent of citizens have made the same choice and have been followed by 16% who claim they support integration because there will be more employment opportunities. Finally, 11% of the respondents expect less poverty. Moreover, a quarter of Albanians expect better functioning of the rule of law and less corruption, thereby stressing the institutional aspect of the process both in establishing and consolidating the right overall framework for further political and economic development. Only 9% associate their support with a hope for a stronger democracy (AIIS 2020, 5-7).

Another confirmation of the Albanian citizens' enthusiastic support for the EU membership comes from the Standard Eurobarometer (winter 2020-2021). According to this report, the support for EU membership remains strong in Albania (83%), despite a three-

percentage point decline since the last Standard Eurobarometer survey in summer 2020 (EB93). Responding to the question: 'Taking everything into account, would you say that your country would benefit or not from being a member of the EU?', 91% of the Albanians have responded that their country would be better after being part of the EU (EB94 2021, 87).

The Perceptions of the Marginalized Groups and the Knowledge Gap

The study 'Perceptime mbi integrimin në BE dhe zbatimin e kuadrit ligjor për të drejtat e njeriut' ('Perceptions for the EU Integration and the Law Enforcement in the Frame of the Civil Rights'), in December 2019, part of the project 'Unë zgjedh Europën' ('I choose Europe'), by Elda Zotaj and Gentiola Madhi, is a serious attempt to collect, analyze and describe the differences in the perceptions of the marginalized groups with the rest of the society in the frame of the eurointegration process. The study explores two different groups' perceptions, knowledge, and attitudes: online and offline samples.

The data gathered in this study shows that 80% of the offline sample (people interviewed in person) declare that they do not have any knowledge or have minimal knowledge about the European Union. Only 20% of them have average or very good knowledge about the institutions of the Union. 60% of the online sample (people interviewed through the Internet) declare that they have an average or a high level of knowledge of the EU institutions. We can see a knowledge gap between the people interviewed online and offline. These results derive from several factors: internet access, age, the level of education, and economic status (Zotaj and Madhi 2019, 33).

The authors understood that most online respondents were young during the data analysis process. 62.3% of the people interviewed online had an average age of 18 and 24 years. Meanwhile, about 35.5% of the offline sample were 25 to 35 years old. This comes because the Internet is widely used by the youth, who are fond of social media. Considering the educational level of the sample, 60% of the offline sample had only their primary school (9 years of school), and the majority of them were people with disabilities or did belong to the Roma and Egyptian communities; meanwhile, the 67.2% of the online group declared they had a university diploma. 64.8% of the offline group declared they were unemployed, while 46.7% of the online group did have a job. This high level of unemployment is linked to the educational level of the offline group and the difficulties they face in finding a job (Zotaj and Madhi 2019).

According to World Bank Report,² Albania is an upper-middle-income country. Data from the Bertelsmann Transformation Index (BTI) Report 2020³ reflect the high ratio of registered Albanian asylum-seekers in EU countries, ranking first among other countries, indicating a high ratio of poverty and inequality. Despite positive achievements in 2014, when Albania gained EU candidate status, and later in 2018, when the European Commission gave a positive recommendation to open the negotiations process, the government has been motivated to pay greater attention to tracking poverty and social exclusion. To the question 'How do you evaluate your knowledge about the EU institutions?', 55-60% of the offline respondents answered 'no knowledge at all', and about 20% of the respondents have minimal knowledge. The low level of

²For more details see at: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/albania>

³For more details see at: <https://bti-project.org/en/reports/country-report/ALB#pos9>

the information and knowledge that the marginalized groups (Roma, Egyptian communities, LGBT, and people with disabilities) have about the EU in general and about its institutions and their functions is not only linked with the education and economic factors or the access at the sources of information but also with the absence of an institutional strategy for the communication, in order to raise the people awareness for the EU integration process.

Again, going back to the study, the data gathered from the online sample show that 60% of the respondents have good and very good knowledge of the EU. Their education, economic status, employment, access to information sources, and ability to use ITC technology allow them to be in touch with the right information and knowledge about EU integration processes. As the media experts, public institutions, or CSOs have underlined during the interviews held in the frame of this study. There is a bias in information because only the educated or the people of a high social status become part of the training, seminars, or forums. The EU integration processes are discussed (Zotaj and Madhi 2019, 36). Specifically, to the question 'Do you see the EU membership as a good thing for your country?', 88-89% of both groups (online and offline) did respond positively, with 'Yes'. This is a very positive attitude that the Albanian citizens have toward the EU integration, incomparable to any other candidate country.

According to the implementation of the law concerning civil rights, in the frame of the eurointegration process, the Albanian citizens (both the online and offline groups) are generally not satisfied. When asked how they will evaluate the law's implementation regarding the right to education, property, public health, and information, the study's authors did get interesting answers. The results described in Figure 3 show that 49.2% of the offline sample declare that these rights are not respected at all, and only 1.7% of them think that these rights are respected. Even respondents in the online sample believe these rights are not respected, with 40.2 percent believing they are not respected at all and 1.6 percent believing they are.

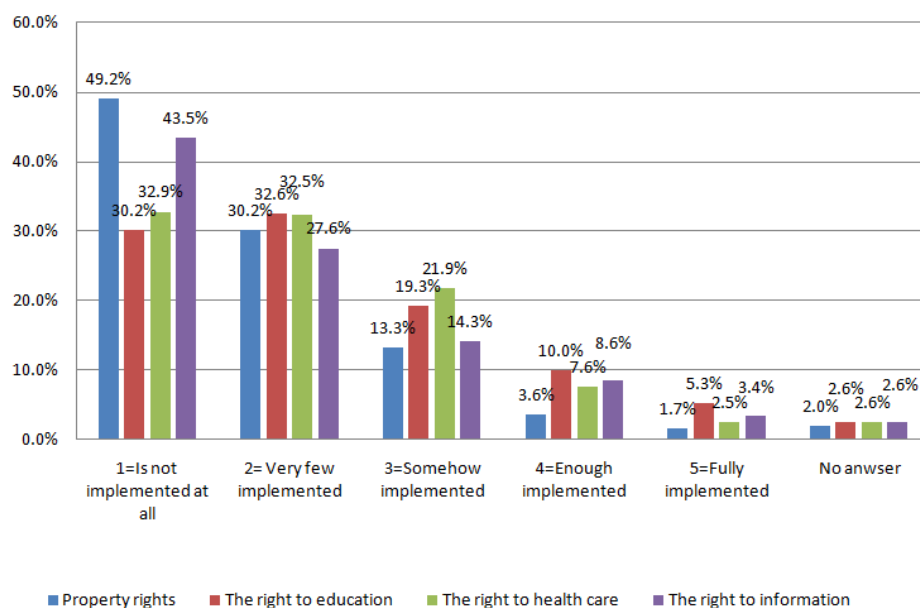


Figure 3: The Perceptions About the Implementation of the Civil Rights (Offline Sample)
(Zotaj and Madhi 2019, 39)

Figure 3 reflects people's high dissatisfaction with enforcing their basic rights. One of their concerns is related to the access to information, so critical for a healthy democracy and so relevant in the frame of the EU integration process. The offline sample (nearly 43.5% of them) declares that they do not have the right to information. Meanwhile, 20% of the online sample say that this right is not respected by public institutions, the same institutions with the constitutional duty to enforce these rights. Overall, citizens' perceptions about human rights enforcement are very negative in the offline sample rather than the online sample.

The last two questions of the questionnaire conducted by the study's authors were about the perception that both samples have regarding Albania's costs and benefits within the framework of EU membership. In this regard, the results indicate that two of the main costs Albania is expected to have (both samples do agree) are that 'the EU favors larger countries at the expense of smaller countries' and that 'the EU costs money'. In addition, for the offline sample, another cost is that 'the tax structure in Europe does not encourage the development of new businesses. For the online sample, a future cost for Albania is going to be 'the high levels of bureaucracy and administration within the EU'. Albania's benefits once part of the EU (both the online and offline groups agree) are considered in the field of 'civil and human rights' and 'employment and free movement of citizens'. The estimate of costs and benefits from both samples is perceived equally (Zotaj and Madhi 2019, 49-50).

CONCLUSION

The European Union foundations are based on human rights, on the birthright for peace, prosperity, and integration. The power of public opinion to influence EU policies is enormous. The same importance has the public opinion in every candidate country for EU membership. An informed and active public opinion is vital for the Europeanization process of the country.

There has been a modest but visible public sphere in Albania since the 90s. There is a crucial need for an institutional strategy for the citizens to be integrated into the EU public sphere. To be active and productive, public opinion must have access to the right sources of information and be trained to understand and evaluate the benefits and costs of EU membership with a balanced sense of reality.

The data gathered from many recent studies show that the Albanian institutions do not have a clear strategy for the proper inclusion of the citizens in the Europeanization process. The Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs is the coordinator of the EU integration process and should coordinate and lead this process efficiently. Many experts cited in this study note a lack of transparency from the Albanian institutions that do not have a generally known communication plan with the civil society and the citizens. The public sphere mirrors the negligence of the Albanian institutions; the citizens are not an active part of the Europeanization process.

Another important component that facilitates the inclusion of the citizens in EU integration is civil society. The CSOs must involve, inform and train different groups in the public sphere to prepare them for the European future of Albania. There are more than 7,600 non-profit organizations registered in Albania, but only 12% of them are focused on the fields of eurointegration.

The role of the CSOs in informing and raising public awareness regarding the membership process is crucial and underlined in every Progress Report from the European Commission. Unfortunately, the CSOs do not actively include the Albanian citizens in the eurointegration process by providing inadequate and sufficient information. Their rather passive role is caused by irregular feedback from national authorities and neglect of CSOs' contribution, an overall lack of transparency, financial support, and a perceived lack of expertise in certain areas.

For informed and active public opinion, the media is one of the main and most important tools. Many studies have shown that the media have the power to create and influence public perceptions. According to the Balkan Barometer (June 2021), 78% of the entire population uses media to create an opinion in Albania. Social media represent another channel widely used by participants (31%). From the monitoring of the Albanian media (TV channels: Top Channel, Klan TV, and Vizion Plus), (News agencies: Albanian News Agency and Balkan Web), (Newspapers: Panorama and Gazeta Shqiptare), for the period September-November 2021, is generally seen that the European themes or events are not covered deeply enough from the media. We observed that the Albanian media covers the news, the press conferences, or official events. However, it is not informing the citizens of what is behind the facts, behind the news. The media is not speaking to exclude marginalized groups from the integration process; the media is not speaking about where the EU funds go; media is not explaining difficult issues about the EU; media is not speaking about the costs or the benefits of the EU membership.

The public opinion in Albania is very enthusiastic about the EU integration, although the long and difficult way of Europeanization. This is connected with the conceptual framework that the perspective of EU integration is a strong stimulus throughout society for achieving progress and democratization of the country. The EU is associated with good governance, human rights, economic development, and prosperity. Since 1992 the dream of the Albanians has been to be like the Europeans, reaching the mentioned above objectives. According to Blendi Kajsia (2008), "the request of Albanians to become members of the EU does not simply mark the formal act of Albania member in the EU. Contrary, it marks such a demand for work, development, modernization, pride" (p. 7). This is why the support by citizens for Albania's membership in the EU has been and remains very strong, for example, 95% in 2008 (AIIS 2020).

For more than two decades, the public perceptions of EU integration have been measured. The Albanians' support for the EU has never reached below 80% - this is considered an impressive level of support. Having in focus all the surveys are done periodically since 2006 by the Albanian Institute for International Studies, the Standard Eurobarometer (EB90, EB94), the Balkan Barometer Reports, etc., we have concluded that the citizens' support for the EU integration in Albania is higher than all other countries, in EU or the Western Balkans. The expectations about the benefits that Albanians mostly link to EU membership are unrealistic. This is because of the integration perspective of Albania in the EU. The Albanians' unanimous support for EU membership is mainly related to the lack of qualitative information about the country's costs that will probably have once part of the EU. The absence of institutions', CSOs, and media to include Albanian citizens in the EU process explains this 'totalitarian' and unreal support for the EU.

From the surveys, studies, interviews, and observations, we conclude Albanian citizens are not included enough in the eurointegration processes, especially the sensitive groups like people with disabilities, LGBT, the Egyptian or Roma communities, etc. The data gathered from the study of the 'Streha' Center (Zotaj and Madhi 2019) show that 80% of the offline sample do not have any knowledge about the European Union, while 60% of the online sample declare that they have an average or a high level of knowledge for the EU. We can see a knowledge gap between the people interviewed online and offline. From the HDI index and other global indexes, the surveys, and interviews conducted, we did conclude that the marginalized groups in Albania are excluded from the integration processes. They lack the appropriate education, economic status, and the right information to participate in the public sphere. We do recommend that the Albanian institutions, in cooperation with the CSOs, create an immediate communication plan to include and integrate the Albanian citizens, especially the marginalized groups, in the EU integration process. Further investments in education and the information of the sensitive groups in Albania about the eurointegration process must be made.

COMPLIANCE WITH ETHICAL STANDARDS

Acknowledgments:

Not applicable.

Funding:

Not applicable.

Statement of human rights:

All procedures performed in studies involving human participants were following the ethical standards of the institutional and/or national research committee and with the Declaration of Helsinki and its later amendments or comparable ethical standards.

Statement on the welfare of animals:

This article does not contain any studies with animals performed by any authors.

Informed consent:

Not applicable.

REFERENCES

1. Adam, Silke. 2009. "Bringing the Mass Media in: The Contribution of the Mass Media for Understanding Citizens, Attitudes towards the European Union". KFG Working Paper Series, No. 4, September 2009.
2. AII.S. June 2020. "The European perspective of Albania Perceptions and realities 2020". Tirana: Kumi Publishing.
3. Alexander J.C. 2006. "The Civil Sphere", New York: Oxford University Press.
4. Balkan Barometer. July 2018. "Public Opinion Analytical Report", Regional Cooperation Council, available at: <https://www.rcc.int/pubs/66/balkan-barometer-2018-public-opinion-survey>
5. Balkan Barometer. July 2019. "Public Opinion Analytical Report", Regional Cooperation Council, available at: <https://www.rcc.int/pubs/89/balkan-barometer-2019-public-opinion-survey>
6. Balkan Barometer. June 2020. "Public Opinion Analytical Report", Regional Cooperation Council, available at: <https://www.rcc.int/pubs/95/balkan-barometer-2020-public-opinion-survey>
7. Balkan Barometer. June 2021. "Public Opinion Analytical Report", Regional Cooperation Council, available at: <https://www.rcc.int/pubs/122/balkan-barometer-2021--public-opinion>
8. Bertelsmann Index. 2020. "Albania, Economic Transformation" Report, available at: <https://bti-project.org/en/reports/country-report/ALB#pos9>
9. Bërdufi, Dorina. 2019. "Political Parties Attitude, Voter Trust and EU Integration (Albanian Case)". Communication Sciences - Globalization of Cultural Diversity, EIRP Proceeding, Vol 14, No 1.
10. Çela, Alba. 2012. "The European perspective of Albania. Perceptions and realities". Albanian Institute for International Studies, Tirana: M&B.
11. Çela, A., Rakipi, A., Krisafi, L. June 2020. "The European perspective of Albania. Perceptions and realities". Albanian Institute for International Studies, Tirana: Kumi Publishing.
12. Communication Theory. 2019. available at: <https://www.communicationtheory.org/knowledge-gap-theory/>
13. Council of Ministers. 2020. "Raportpërcurinë e procesit të integritetit për vitin 2019 drejtuar Kuvendit të Republikës së Shqipërisë", Tirana, P.N.D. available at: https://www.parlament.al/Files/Kerkese/20200302103213Kuvendi_Raporti_2019_Final.pdf
14. De Vreese, C. and Boomgaarden, H. G. 2006. "Media Effects on Public Opinion about the Enlargement of the European Union". JCMS 2006, Volume 44. Number 2, pp. 419–436.
15. European Commission. 2021. Albania Progress Report, available at: https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/albania-report-2021_en
16. European Movement in Albania. 2020. "Inclusion of Civil Society Organizations on the EU Integration process of the country", Policy Paper.
17. Fraser, Nancy. 1992. "Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy". Duke University Press.

18. Habermas, Jürgen. 1991. "The public sphere", In Mukerji, C.; Schudson, M. (Ed.): Rethinking popular culture. Contemporary perspectives in cultural studies, Berkeley/Los Angeles: University of California Press.
19. Habermas, Jürgen. 1996. "Between Facts and Norms: Contributions to a Discourse Theory of Law and Democracy". Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
20. Human Development Index. 2019. Education: mean years of schooling, available at: <http://hdr.undp.org/en/indicators/103006>
21. Kajsia, Blendi. 2008. "Death of Politics, Freedom of the People! -The Crisis of Representation in Albania", Polis Journal, No 5/2008.
22. Madhi, G. and Sopoti, R. 2020. "Civil society and Albania's EU integration process" Partners Albania for Change and Development, available at: <http://aien.al/postime/study-civil-society-and-albania-s-eu-integration-process-1>
23. Peshkopia, R., Arifi, A., and Sheqiri, G. 2020. "The role of personality traits and political trust in people's attitudes toward EU membership". European Politics and Society, Volume 21, 2020, Issue 4, pp. 452-469.
24. Salvatore, A., Schmidtke, O. and Trenz, H.J. 2013. "Rethinking the Public Sphere Through Transnationalizing Processes: Europe and Beyond". Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.
25. Standard Eurobarometer 90. Autumn, 2018. Public opinion in the European Union. European Commission, available at: <https://www.europa.eu/eurobarometer>
26. Standard Eurobarometer 94. Winter, 2021. Public opinion in the European Union. European Commission, available at: <https://www.europa.eu/eurobarometer>
27. The World Bank. 2021. Report for Albania, available at: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/albania>
28. Tichenor, P. J., Donohue, G. A., and Olien, C. N. 1970. "Mass media flow and differential growth in knowledge". Public Opinion Quarterly, 34, 159-170.
29. Zotaj, Elda and Madhi, Gentila. 2019. "Perceptime mbi integrimin në BE dhe zbatimin e kuadrit ligjor për të drejtat e njeriut". I choose Europe, Streha Center.

Copyright © 2022 The author/s

This work is licensed under a CC-BY 3.0 license

(*) Corresponding author

Peer review method: Double-blind

Received: 28.03.2022

Accepted: 15.04.2022

Published: 14.06.2022

Original scientific article

DOI: <https://www.doi.org/10.47305/JLIA2282136s>

How to cite:


Spahiu, Muhamet J., and Betim J. Spahiu. 2022. "THE FACTORS INFLUENCING GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT GROWTH IN THE POST-PANDEMIC PERIOD: THE CASE OF KOSOVO". *Journal of Liberty and International Affairs* 8 (2):136-49. <https://e-jlia.com/index.php/jlia/article/view/603>.



THE FACTORS INFLUENCING GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT GROWTH IN THE POST-PANDEMIC PERIOD: THE CASE OF KOSOVO

Muhamet J. Spahiu¹, Betim J. Spahiu^{2*}

¹College of International Management GLOBUS - Prishtina, Kosovo  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8552-0432> ✉ spahiu.m@gmail.com

²College of International Management GLOBUS - Prishtina, Kosovo  <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3429-9162> ✉ betim.spahiu@kolegjigloobus.com

Abstract: *This paper examined the factors that influenced the Gross Domestic Product growth (GDP) in the post-Covid-19 period in Kosovo. This paper explored the impact of consumption, remittances, exports, imports, and inflation on Kosovo's GDP growth using fixed effects regression analysis with data from various secondary sources to analyze their impact from Kosovo's perspective. The results demonstrated that consumption, remittances, and exports had a statistically significant influence on GDP growth during the post-pandemic economic lockdown stage, whereby imports and inflation had a little inverse relation. Further, the Hausman test statistics on the adequacy of the fixed-effect model selection represent a superior performance compared to the random effect model. The paper is the first that extensively explores the impact of these factors that drove GDP growth in the post-pandemic period in Kosovo's economy. The novelty of this paper is that it recognizes the response of governments to the pandemic and accurately identifies the macroeconomic factors that influenced GDP growth.*

Keywords: *GDP; Consumption; Remittances; Export; Time Series Models*

INTRODUCTION

Following the 2020 economic lockdown, most economies and international institutions concentrated on economic recovery. Economic growth in most countries fell sharply in the second quarter of 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic, rebounded significantly in the third quarter, and has been mainly positive after that. Even if they are reduced, the worldwide economic consequences continue to increase. World Bank's economic forecasts were very pessimistic for most countries, particularly Western Balkan countries, including Kosovo. World Bank economic growth predictions were so volatile due to disturbances in labor markets, production, supply chains, and disruptions in global energy, shipping, and transportation constraints. However, after economic growth fell, the economy began to breathe confidence and compared with the negative economic growth rate, most countries are experiencing very positive rates. Overall, industrialized economies have made progress in vaccinating increasing proportions of their inhabitants, improving the potential of a long-term economic rebound.

What caused the highest economic growth ever recorded in Kosovo, also in many other countries, especially in the Western Balkans, makes it more difficult to predict and measure the fact of compared to negative economic growth rates in 2020, positive changes in consumption, supply chain disruptions, large diaspora arrivals in the country, very high recorded inflation, or high turnover of goods and government expenditures. Through the various stages of the pandemic-related health and economic crises, governments responded with several policy initiatives that often attempted to balance competing policy objectives.

Compared to 2020, Kosovo's economy is recovering from its deepest recession in a decade, driven by improved vaccination rates, renewed mobility, policy actions, and tremendous diaspora support. After shrinking by 5.3 percent in 2020, real GDP is projected to grow by 7.5 percent in 2021. The government's reaction through the fiscal policy to the pandemic provided relief to cope with the consequences of this crisis, exclusively for households and businesses and managed to mitigate the impact of the pandemic. Following a strong revenue recapture, the fiscal policy stance was tightened to an almost balanced position in 2021 by a deficit of approximately 8 percent of GDP in 2020. Nevertheless, government action failed any significant effect, and its impact on the economy was not reflected. However, the strong financial support that filled this gap was the remittances from the diaspora. Thanks to financial stability, the banking sector continued with a steady increase in net credit to the private sector. Inflation in 2021 is projected to have risen to more than 5 percent (year on year) due to higher energy and food prices, which returned to their pre-pandemic levels. The banking sector has been generally resilient, with strong capital and liquidity reserves and low non-performing loans (IMF 2022).

Therefore, based on the issues raised above, the research aims to analyze the determinants that influenced real GDP growth after the lockdown in the context of Kosovo's economy. This research will be of interest to many young researchers and policymaking structures. The research uses secondary data structured and presented according to the standard format defined by IFM, including the period before, during, and after the lockdown, to evaluate and eliminate dilemmas about determinants through the econometric approach. To achieve this premise, research at the initial stage has structured research questions to create a correlative and unique approach between research questions and hypotheses. Therefore, the research questions are:

RQ1: What was the effect of remittances on consumption growth and their correlation with real GDP growth?

RQ2: What impact did Export/Import have on real GDP growth during the Covid-19 period?

RQ3: What was the impact of inflation on real GDP growth during this period?

The hypotheses presented in the framework of this research are continuously related to the research questions presented and the substance of the study and are as follows:

H₁: There is a significant positive correlation between consumption and real GDP growth.

H₂: There is a significant positive correlation between remittances and real GDP growth.

H₃: There is a significant positive correlation between exports and real GDP growth.

H₄: There is a significant negative correlation between imports and real GDP growth.

H₅: There is a significant negative association between inflation and real GDP growth.

The study thus aims to contribute in several aspects, starting with the expansion of the scientific literature where these determinants are investigated and their effect, on the other hand, provides original empirical evidence in the scenario of Kosovo economy through a dynamic approach and finally, gives important inputs for policymaking structures. The research is structured in the flow logic, starting with the introduction. In the second part, the literature background is presented. The third part contains the specified data and model, the fourth part includes the analysis and the findings, and the final part is with conclusions.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

Covid-19 is a worldwide health problem in the entire world. The increased case of Covid-19 proved to have quite an important influence on the economy globally which may have affected stability (Susilawati *et al.* 2020). The Covid-19 pandemic that the UN has established affects transportation, tourism, trade, health, and other sectors. Numerous states take the 'lockdown' policy to prevent the further spread of Covid-19, so economic activities are hindered and pressure the world's economy (Keuangan 2020). Things were different back in 2015 when the United Nations accepted 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to improve people's lives and the natural world by 2030. It was arguably one of humanity's finest moments the whole planet signed up. Many national budgets were flush with funds. Governments agreed on ambitious treaties, including the Paris climate agreement, the Sendai Framework on disaster risk reduction, and the Addis Ababa plan for financing development (Naidoo and Fisher 2020). The analysis is relevant in the current revisions on the economic influence of pandemic-prevention efforts.

Similarly, the set-up examination was used to evaluate a variety of lockdown lifting outlines (moving to the so-called 'Phase-2'), highlighting the complexity for legislators in striking the right balance between contagion spread and economic revitalization (Spelta *et al.* 2020). Governments worldwide are taking measures to support the economic sectors and mitigate the adverse impact of the pandemic. These measures vary across countries, and their implication is something that will be understood over time. The whole range of consequences of the Covid-19 for the energy sector is still evolving and is difficult to predict (McCarthy *et al.* 2020).

The results prove that relaxing lockdown measures harm the pandemic. Furthermore, despite the negative impact of prolonged lockdown measures on health and the economy, countries must decide on the best timing and strategy for exiting such measurements to safely return to normal life with minimal loss of lives and the economy, taking into account the capacity of their economic and health systems. Instead of focusing on health, a more holistic strategy that considers the economy is recommended (Shimul *et al.* 2020). GDP is expected to improve quickly to pre-Covid-19 levels by 2021 since the immunization program is expected to relieve a relaxation of Covid-19-related limitations. The predicted action is further encouraged by the substantial fiscal and monetary policy measures already been proclaimed. Supplementary out, the pace of GDP evolution is expected to slow as the boost from these factors fades.

Meanwhile, the economic prospect appears to be extremely negative. It is dependent on how the pandemic spreads, the actions are taken to preserve public health, and how households, businesses, and financial markets react to these developments (Lea 2021).

The consumption dynamics are worth emphasizing, for they are informative about the nature of shocks that we introduce into our model. Interpreting the Covid-19 shock as a large temporary decline in TFP in a neoclassical growth model, the investment would experience a sharp contraction mirroring households' desire to smooth consumption. In contrast, the data shows a drop in consumption that roughly imitates the decline in GDP (Buera *et al.* 2021). The liberalization of capital movements and people worldwide, especially in Europe, has reconfigured international financial flows. For this reason, specialists and researchers are focused on the importance of various financial flows and their efficiency in achieving ambitious goals for sustainable development. Associative analysis of the effects of remittance and foreign direct investment on economic growth and sustainable development is gaining ground (Jushi *et al.* 2021).

The remittances migrant workers send to their countries of origin are included among the factors with an established link with economic development and revenue inequality at home. Different from their hidden effects, some empirical records suggest remittances have positive links with economic growth and inequality, while others suggest the opposite. Despite their profound impact on economic activity, the literature shows remittances have different effects on economic growth and inequality. Chowdhury (2016), Etonam Adetou and Fiodendji (2019), and Adams and Cuecuecha (2013) state that not only do remittances affect economic progress, but they also influence the financial system and institutional quality, reduce poverty and increase human and physical capital investment in developing countries (Bajra 2021). Durguti *et al.* (2020), using a combined approach of econometric models to assess the degree of impact of remittances on economic growth for the Western Balkan economies, support the argument that there is an important positive association between these two parameters. This study further emphasizes that these remittances impact the financial industry, where some of these funds remain the financial potential for lending to the private sector.

Moreover, Durguti *et al.* (2021), using the dynamic approach to evaluating panel data through Arellano-Bover/Blundell-Bond estimation in the first difference, confirms the positive existence of an impact between these two parameters. In recent years, the literature on financial development, public finance, and other areas has substantially improved; however, remittances are among the most neglected sources with significantly larger resource inflow that may serve the purpose of reducing environmental degradation. The literature on export diversification and education is also limited, with conflicting findings Zafar *et al.* (2021).

METHODOLOGY

Data Source

The research data sample is composed of quarterly data on GDP growth, consumption, remittances, exports, imports, and inflation in the context of the Kosovo economy from 2019Q₁ to 2021Q₄, which in total are 12 observations. The sampling data were gathered from the Kosovo Agency of Statistics, the Central Bank of Kosovo, and the Tax Administration of Kosovo

(TAK), covering the interval from 2019 to 2021. The motivation for selecting this timespan is to examine the consequences before, during, and after the pandemic lockdown. Table 1 shows the variable categorization, description, and predicted results for each parameter.

Table 1: Variable Descriptions and Data Source (Source: Authors' selection)

Variable	Denominations	Acronyms	Data Source
Dependent Variable	Real Gross Domestic Product	R_GDP	Kosovo Agency of Statistics
Explanatory Variables	Consumption	Cons	Tax Administration of Kosovo
	Remittances	Rem	Central Bank of Kosovo
	Export	Exp	Kosovo Agency of Statistics
	Import	Imp	Kosovo Agency of Statistics
	Inflation	Inf	Kosovo Agency of Statistics

The predictor variable of the econometric equation was constructed based on the research questions and the overall goal of this study. Considering that our study aspires to provide insight into the linkages underlying economic expansion and a variety of macroeconomic and financial parameters, with a special emphasis on the possible significance of remittances in lengthy growth, we utilize GDP growth as a proxy. A ratio of this type could estimate the change in the market value of all commodities and services produced inside a country's boundaries over a year. GDP growth is a commonly used measurement in evaluating a country's economic growth (Bergheim 2008).

Specification of the Econometric Model

Numerous previous empirical studies have attempted to identify the determinants of economic growth. Nevertheless, as emphasized in these studies, growth theories are open-ended. Hence the diversity of theoretical views makes it difficult to identify the most effective growth-promoting policies (Moral-Benito 2009). As a result, since the study is constructed on time-series statistics, the technique employed is random effects and fixed effects estimation. Based on the previous literature and statistics available for our sample, the following growth model is specified:

$$\text{Economic_growth}_{it} = \alpha + \beta_1(\text{Con}_{it}) + \beta_2(\text{Rem}_{it}) + \beta_3(\text{Exp}_{it}) + \beta_4(\text{Imp}_{it}) + \beta_5(\text{Inf}_{it}) + \varepsilon_{it} \dots \dots \dots (1)$$

Whereby $\text{Economic_growth}_{it}$: signifies the dependent variable. The explanatory predictors chosen are as follows: Con_{it} : signifies consumption level during the observation period, Rem_{it} : represents remittances, Exp_{it} : exports, Imp_{it} : imports, and Inf_{it} : signifies inflation. The error term is ε_{it} and the regression parameter is β . The paradigm impedes the constant of the predictors' factors from being comparable across the units (i) and the period (t).

Descriptive Statistical Analysis

The descriptive analysis includes the values shown in Table 2 for minimum, maximum, mean, standard deviation, skewness, and kurtosis. STATA software was used to calculate the values. The presented results show that the mean value of real GDP is 1.767 billion euros, followed by consumption, which is 1.719 billion euros. Comparing the average value from the observed data, it can be seen that they have remittances where their mean value is 248 million euros. The two parameters that are considered very vital for the economy of a country are export/import; where based on the empirical analysis, it is seen that the mean value of import is 1,082 million euros, while exports have a mean value of 552 million euros which shows us that the economy of Kosovo has a negative trade balance. Furthermore, finally, inflation has a mean value of .02 percent. Table 2 provides detailed statistics for all other variables investigated in the analysis.

Table 2: Summary of Descriptive Statistics (Source: Authors' calculation)

Variables	R_GDP	Cons	Rem	Exp	Imp	Inf
Minimal	1,404.00	1,482.07	184.70	230.52	783.75	-0.0033
Maximal	2,100.58	1,998.95	311.50	1,125.14	1,680.51	0.0643
Mean	1,767.35	1,719.27	247.94	551.68	1,082.81	0.0208
Std.Dev	215.98	162.48	42.49	15.63	61.35	0.0202
Skewness	-.27561	.07715	.03123	1.0331	.98539	.68655
Kurtosis	2.0083	2.0333	1.9013	2.4623	3.3923	2.7685
Obs	12	12	12	12	12	12

The dispersion of data from Table 2 is observed to be around close to the null value (0), which proves that the statistics are symmetrically rightly (Bulmer 2003). On the other hand, kurtosis outcomes reveal that we have positive values due to differences. According to authors Balanda and MacGillivray (1988), a rise in kurtosis is connected with the progress of the likelihood mass from the dispersion sides to the centers with its axis.

Diagnostic Tests for Multicollinearity

In the research framework, the correlation analysis was applied to investigate the degree of association across real GDP growth as a predictor variable with determinants known as explanatory parameters such as consumption, remittances, exports, imports, and inflation. In addition to giving us information about the impact between them, this analysis is also a diagnostic test on the multicollinearity of the data. From Table 3, it is noted that all observed determinants have a positive association with real GDP growth. At the same time, we can conclude that the data do not have a multicollinearity problem since all determinants have a moderate association with the predictor variable. The problem with multicollinearity can be considered if we have a coefficient with the greatest value of 0.7.

Table 3: Correlation Analysis and VIF (Source: Authors' calculation)

	R_GDP	Cons	Rem	Exp	Imp	Inf	VIF	1/VIF
R_GDP	1.0000							
Cons	0.4882	1.0000					3.69	0.271315
Rem	0.5930	0.6105	1.0000				3.38	0.295530
Exp	0.4644	0.1738	0.4526	1.0000			1.05	0.953241
Imp	0.4480	0.5868	0.5847	0.3478	1.0000		1.02	0.92455
Inf	0.4630	0.2010	0.1401	0.7148	0.7001	1.0000	3.53	0.282980
Mean Value							2.53	

However, in addition to removing any remaining doubts regarding the data's multicollinearity issues, we used VIF analysis in the study. Table 3 illustrates that no parameter has a value larger than 3.69, while the mean value of the analyzed parameters is 2.53, which is less than the significant value of estimated $\alpha \leq 0.05$. This evidence validates the premise that the applied data do not display multicollinearity.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the results of some diagnostic tests that are considered very important before performing regression analysis. Random and fixed effect regression analysis was performed to analyze the impact of consumption, remittances, exports, imports, and inflation on real GDP growth. Based on the model's suitability in this research, the Hausman test is used, where the result is 18.34, which means that the basic hypothesis (H_0) is rejected. The alternative hypothesis (H_a) is accepted. In this context, the random-effects model is excluded as the fixed effects model is more appropriate. Table 4 presents the detailed results generated by the econometric analysis. The alpha constant R^2 is 0.6658 (see Table 4, R^2 -squared = 0.6658), which shows us that the defined variables explain about 66.6 percent of real GDP growth, while the rest is explained by other variables, which are not involved in research.

On the other hand, the F statistic value is 22.59 (p -value=0.005). At the test level of 5 percent, all applied variables have a value lower than $F \leq 10$ and, as such, offer us indications of stability on model suitability. Finally, two tests (χ -heteroscedasticity - p -value=0.406 and Durbin-Watson 2.151) prove that the applied data have no heteroscedasticity and serial correlation problems.

Table 4: Estimation Results (Source: Authors' calculation)

	Model 1		Model 2	
	Coefficient	P> z	Coefficient	P> z
<i>_constant</i>	-96.642	0.691	-41.673	0.887
Consumption	1.0655	0.000	0.7597	0.009
Remittances	0.4340	0.090	1.5093	0.006

Export	0.8685	0.000	0.6992	0.049
Import	-0.4809	0.111	-0.2114	0.644
Inflation	-16.2813	0.346	-13.5617	0.566
Observation number	12	-"	12	-"
Diagnostic tests				
R ² - squared	0.6536	-"	0.6658	-"
Adj R ² - squared	0.5987	-"	0.5252	-"
Hausman test	-"	-"	18.34	$\rho = 0.105$
Wald chi2& F-test	128.82	$\rho = 0.000$	F(5,4) 22.59	$\rho = 0.005$
χ -heteroscedasticity	7.69	$\rho = 0.406$	-"	-"
Durbin-Watson	2.151	-"	-"	-"

Note. (***), (**), (*) significant respectively at 1, 5, and 10 percent. Model 1 is a Random Effects, and Model 2 is Fixed Effects.

Based on the empirical evidence provided in Table 4 (coefficient β and statistical significance p) for consumption is positive 0.7597 and statistically significant at 1 percent since the value $p=0.009$. From this, we can conclude that consumption has a positive impact on real GDP growth in the context of Kosovo. This means that a 1 percent increase in consumption will affect a 0.75 percent increase in real GDP. These results are supported by previous studies but are also fully consistent with the authors Manzoor and Shoukat's (2020) study, which is based on econometric results, argues that consumption growth is considered a prime driver in the past lockdown period in the real GDP growth. However, it is worth noting that our findings are in full accordance with the study conducted by Buera *et al.* (2021), where it is concluded that any reduction in consumption will affect the real reduction of GDP. The result proves the verification of the hypothesis (H_1).

Remittances from the migration, which have reached their peak, are another deciding factor that has directly affected the expansion of consumption. Remittances have a constructive coefficient of 1.5093 with a significance level of 1 percent (with $p=0.006$). This result verifies the hypothesis (H_2). These findings indicate that the rise of the level of 1 percent of remittances directly affects the real GDP of 1.51 percent. The empirical findings are constant with studies conducted before the onset of the pandemic but also with studies conducted during and after the lockdown, such as Mayer and Shera (2017), Comes *et al.* (2018), Etonam Adetou and Fiodendji (2019), Kajtazi and Fetai (2022) where they argue that remittances have a confident influence on real GDP growth. Furthermore, the evidence contradicts the outcomes presented in this study, where they claim that remittances have an adverse influence. Authors who support this perspective are Jongwanich and Kohpaiboon (2019), Jawaid and Ali Raza (2014), Craigwell *et al.* (2010), and others were contradicted, who stated that remittance inflows harm GDP growth.

Furthermore, the last variable in the research that has shown to be significant in real GDP growth is export. Table 4 (see the export coefficient) shows that the coefficient β is 0.6992 with $p=0.049$. These findings confirm hypothesis (H_3), which shows that export growth affects real GDP growth. In other words, any increase at the level of 1 percent of the export level will affect the GDP growth of 0.69 percent, respecting the principle of *ceteris paribus*. These findings support the neoclassical theory, which argues that any increase in exports is related to economic

growth. This theory is supported by Yaghmaian and Ghorashi (1995), Ali *et al.* (2022), and Durguti *et al.* (2020).

On the other hand, there are controversial arguments regarding the impact on economic growth in the context of exports and imports, which oppose our findings. Thus, the study conducted by the authors Saaed and Hussain (2015) on the Tunisian economy showed that exports and imports have a unilateral correlation. Also, the author Fullerton *et al.* (2012), analyzing the correlation between these two factors, have argued that imports have a more crucial role than exports in economic growth. At the same time, the last two variables, import and inflation, have turned out to harm real GDP growth, in econometric terms, statistically insignificant. These results suggest that imports through the observed time did not have any significant impact, identically also inflation. Furthermore, therefore, they do not have any pronounced importance to analyze and discuss.

CONCLUSION

The study's overarching goal was to examine the association between consumption, remittances, export, import, and inflation with GDP growth, particularly in post-pandemic economic lockdown, in the Kosovo economy. Kosovo is a consumption economy with a huge negative trade deficit. Even though the export had constructive variation in 2021, the trade balance is more adverse due to import increase, increasing by 16.1%, compared to 11.5% in 2019. We conclude that economic growth indicators between a strict lockdown and a full opening-up of economic activity are strictly dominated by the remittances and their influence on consumption. The primary objective was to discover the correlations and assess how these factors influenced GDP. The study employed secondary data from 2019 to 2021, dynamic techniques via random and fixed effect regression. The research also used a variety of diagnostic tests in terms of achieving more coherent and systematic results. For the perceived sample, the outcomes reveal that GDP growth is determined by the factors directly connected to consumption and significant to variation in export and import. The research also examined the effect of remittances on GDP growth, its influence on negative economic growth in 2020, and its correlation with past pandemic economic lockdowns that started in the last quarter of 2020 and 2021. Remittances in the world represent one of the major international financial resources, which sometimes exceed foreign direct investment (FDI) flows. For centuries, there have been heated debates on the sources of economic growth in emerging economies and why some countries reflect strong economic growth compared to others (Dietmar and Adela 2017). However, this research and other author studies (Bajra 2021) show that remittances influence consumption and economic growth. According to the IMF Annual report for Kosovo, Kosovo Government Economic Recovery Measures, both in 2020 and 2021, has a determinant impact on the indicators we analyzed in this study and the GDP growth of Kosovo.

Exports of Kosovo have a determined increase in 2021. This is the case as the strong growth in goods and services exports is projected to be offset by the growth in the value of goods imports. The recovery of economic activity explained the widest trade deficit in 2021 by the MFI. The trade deficit of goods expanded to 45.7% of GDP in 2021, from 38% of GDP in 2020 and 40.3% of GDP in 2019. In particular, the increase in imports of goods reflected the

recovery of native consumption, investment claim, and higher commodity prices. According to the analyzed data, exports of goods increased by 47%, from a small base, led by base metals and furniture. Inflation in 2021 increased from higher energy and food prices. According to the MFI, increased communication tariffs also played a role. According to the analyzed data, inflation has harmed real economic growth. Consequently, inflation has also increased consumption, as, with the increase of inflation, the purchasing power decreases since more money is spent on purchasing the same products.

Policymaking Implications

Policymaking mechanisms may benefit from research on macroeconomic policy redesign, particularly in policy allocation of remittances and the business division that exports its products. The research shows how diaspora inflows affect consumption, respectively, the domestic economy's structure and economic growth. Diaspora inflows lead to the distribution of factors of production. Foreign investment is also affected by remittances. The Government of Kosovo should build policies for diaspora investments and create advantageous conditions for the diaspora to stay in Kosovo. On the path of balanced growth, diaspora inflows are not predictable to increase further, and thus the convergence of *per capita* income for the domestic economy will stop. Continuous convergence requires the diversification of growth sources. As diaspora-led growth will gradually decline, Kosovo needs to use large diaspora inflows to close even physical and social infrastructure gaps to create stronger conditions for new sources of growth.

Policymakers ought to design development policies that boost and support the activity of export-oriented industries. Long-term reforms in the export sector, with such developing infrastructure, will increase the technical and financial support for potential businesses and, in particular, enhance exports. Policymakers of Kosovo should create advantageous conditions for businesses. Since the national market is quite limited, it should focus on producing products that replace imported foodstuffs and increase export opportunities. Given that the structure of the world economy is changing as a result of the pandemic shock, the supply chains for many countries have also changed. Kosovo needs to take advantage of the gaps created in supply chains by increasing exports by creating advantageous conditions, and restraining exporters.

COMPLIANCE WITH ETHICAL STANDARDS

Acknowledgments:

Not applicable.

Funding:

Not applicable.

Statement of human rights:

This article does not contain any studies with human participants performed by any authors.

Statement on the welfare of animals:

This article does not contain any studies with animals performed by any authors.

Informed consent:

Not applicable.

REFERENCES

1. Ahmad, Manzur. & Khattak, S. Iqbal. 2020. "Is Aggregate Domestic Consumption Spending (ADCS) Per Capita Determining CO2 Emissions in South Africa? A New Perspective". *Environ Resource Econ* 75, 529–552 (2020). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10640-019-00398-9>
2. Ali, Sabna. Murshed, Syed Mansub. & Papyrakis, Elissaios. 2022. "Oil, export diversification and economic growth in Sudan: evidence from a VAR model". *Miner Econ*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13563-022-00310-w>
3. Andrews, Anthony Paul. 2015. "Exports, Imports, and Economic Growth in Liberia: Evidence from Causality and Analysis". *Journal of Management Policy and Practice*. 16(3), 95.
4. Bajra, Ujkan. 2021. "The Interactive Effects of Remittances on Economic Growth and Inequality in Western Balkans Countries". *Journal of Business Economics and Management*, Volume 22, Issue 3: 757–775. <https://doi.org/10.3846/jbem.2021.1458>
5. Balanda, Kevin and H.L. MacGillivray. 1988. "Kurtosis: A Critical Review". *The American Statistician* 42:2 [May 1988], pp 111–119. DOI: 10.1080/00031305.1988.10475539
6. Bergheim, Stefan. 2008. "The dependent variable: GDP growth". Long-Run Growth Forecasting. *Business and Economics*, 36–41. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-540-77680-2_3
7. Buera, Francisco J. Fattal-Jaef, Roberto. Hopenhayn, Hugo. Neumeyer, P. Andres. & Shin, Yongseok. 2021. "The Economic Ripple Effects of COVID-19". *National Bureau for Economic Report, Working 28704*, [HTTPS://DOI.ORG/10.3386/w28704](https://doi.org/10.3386/w28704)
8. Bulmer, Micheal G. (2003). "Principles of Statistics". *Dover Publications Inc.* (17 March 2003). New York, United States. New Edition. ISBN13 9780486637600
9. Comes, Calin-Adrian. Bunduchi, Elena. Vasile, Valentina & Stefan Daniel. 2018. "The impact of Foreign Direct Investments and remittances on Economic Growth: A case study in Central and Eastern Europe". *Sustainability*, 10(1), 1-16. <http://dx.doi.org/10.3390/su10010238>
10. Craigwell, Roland. Mahalia Jackman & Winston Moore. 2010. "Economic volatility and remittances". *International Journal of Development Issues*, 9(1), 25-42. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/14468951011033789>
11. Meyer, Dietmar, and Adela Shera. 2017. "The impact of remittances on economic growth: An econometric model", *Economia*, Volume 18, Issue 2, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.econ.2016.06.001>
12. Durguti, Esat; Ali, Gashi; Emine Demiri Kunoviku, Filloreta & Mehmeti, Milaim. (2020). "DAF Determinants Affecting Economic Growth – Evidence for Western Balkans Countries". *International Journal of Finance & Banking Studies* (2147-4486), 9(1), 36–46. <https://doi.org/10.20525/ijfbs.v9i1.652>
13. Durguti, Esat. Tmava, Qazim. Demiri-Kunoviku, Filloreta & Krasniqi, Enver. 2021. "Panel estimating effects of macroeconomic determinants on inflation: Evidence of Western Balkan", *Cogent Economics & Finance*, 9:1, <https://doi.org/10.1080/23322039.2021.1942601>

14. Fullerton, Thomas M. Boehmer, Charles R. 2012. "International trade and economic growth in Mexico". *Empirical Economics Letters*, Vol. 11, No. 9: pp. 869-876.
<https://mpra.ub.uni-muenchen.de/42991>
15. IMF. 2022. "Country Report No. 22/5, Republic of Kosovo 2021", *Article IV Consultation - Press Release and Staff Report*, Page 24.
<https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/CR/Issues/2022/01/11/Republic-of-Kosovo-2021-Article-IV-Consultation-Press-Release-and-Staff-Report-511873>.
16. Jawaid, Syed Tehseen & Raza. Ali Syed. 2014. "Effects of Workers' Remittances and its Volatility on Economic Growth in South Asia Article in International Migration". *International Migration*, 54(2), 50-68. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/imig.12151>
17. Jongwanich, J., & Kohpaiboon, A. 2019. "Workers' Remittances, Capital Inflows, and Economic Growth in Developing Asia and the Pacific". *Asian Economic Journal*, 33(1), 39-65. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/asej.12167>
18. Jushi, Esmeralda. Hysa, Eglantina. Cela, Arjona. Panait, Panarit and Voica, Marian Catalin. 2021. "Financing Growth through Remittances and Foreign Direct Investment: Evidence from Balkan Countries". *Journal of Risk and Financial Management* 14: 117.
<https://doi.org/10.3390/jrfm14030117>
19. Kajtazi, Kaltrina & Fetaj, Besnik. 2022. "Does the Remittance Generate Economic Growth in the southeast European Countries?". *Scientific Annals of Economics and Business*, 69(1), 57-67. <https://doi.org/10.47743/saeb-2022-0004>
20. Lea, Ruth. 2021. "GDP falls nearly 10% in 2020 but, after first-quarter weakness, should recover well in 2021". Arbuthnot Banking Group. 2021 15 February;15.
21. Akrofi, Mark McCarthy and Hammond Antwi, Sarpong. 2020. "COVID-19 energy sector responses in Africa: A review of preliminary government interventions". ELSEVIER, *Energy Research & Social Science*, Volume 68: 101681, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.erss.2020.101681>
22. Meyer, Dietmer & Shera, Adela. 2017. "The impact of remittances on economic growth: An econometric model". *Economía*, 18(2), 147-155.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.econ.2016.06.001>
23. Naidoo, Robin & Fisher, Brendan. 2020. "Reset Sustainable Development Goals for a pandemic world; COVID-19 is exposing the fragility of the goals adopted by the United Nations — two-thirds are now unlikely to be met", *Nature* 583, 198-201;
<https://doi.org/10.1038/d41586-020-01999-x>
24. Saaed, Afaf Abdull J & Hussain, Majeed Ali. 2015. "Impact of exports and imports on economic growth: Evidence from Tunisia". *Journal of Emerging Trends in Economics and Management Sciences*. 6(1), 13. <https://hdl.handle.net/10520/EJC179819>
25. Spelta, Alessandro. Andrea, Flori. Francesco, Pierri. Giovanni, Bonaccorsi & Fabio, Pammolli. 2020. "After the lockdown: simulating mobility, public health, and economic recovery". *Nature* 583, 198-201, <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-020-73949-6>.
26. Susilawati, Susilawati. Reinpal Falefi and Agus Purwoko. 2020. "Impact of COVID-19's Pandemic on the Economy of Indonesia". *International Research and Critics Institute, Humanities*, 3(2), pp. 1147-1156, <https://doi.org/10.33258/birci.v3i2.954>

27. Shimul, Shafiun Nahin. Alradie-Mohamed, Angi.Kabir, Russell. Al-Mohaimeed, Abdulrahman.& Mahmud, Ilias. 2021. "Effect of easing lockdown and restriction measures on COVID-19 epidemic projection: A case study of Saudi Arabia". *PLoS ONE* 16 (9): e0256958. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0256958>
28. Yaghmaian, B. & Ghorashi, R. 1995. "Export Performance and Economic Development: An Empirical Analysis". *The American Economist*, 39(2), 37–45. <https://doi.org/10.1177/056943459503900204>
29. Zafar, Muhammad Wasif, Muhammad Mansoor Saleem, Mehmet Akif Destek, and Abdullah Emre Caglar. 2021. "The dynamic linkage between remittances, export diversification, education, renewable energy consumption, economic growth, and CO₂ emissions in top remittance-receiving countries". *Sustainable Development*, Volume 30, Issue 1, <https://doi.org/10.1002/sd.2236>

Copyright © 2022 The author/s
This work is licensed under a CC-BY 3.0 license
(* Corresponding author
Peer review method: Double-blind
Received: 06.04.2022
Accepted: 25.04.2022
Published: 14.06.2022
Original scientific article
DOI: <https://www.doi.org/10.47305/JLIA2282150r>

How to cite:

Reyaz, Mohammad, and Sabir Ahamed. 2022. "SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS OF SOFT POWER DIPLOMACY: A QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS OF AFGHANS' PERCEPTIONS ABOUT INDIA". Journal of Liberty and International Affairs 8 (2):150-76. <https://e-jlia.com/index.php/jlia/article/view/604>.



SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS OF SOFT POWER DIPLOMACY: A QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS OF AFGHANS' PERCEPTIONS ABOUT INDIA

Mohammad Reyaz^{1*}, Sabir Ahamed²

¹Aliah University, India  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3527-4795> ✉ reyaz@aliah.ac.in

²Pratichi Institute, India ✉ sabir@pratichi.org

Abstract: Before the Taliban came back to power in Afghanistan in August 2021, India and Afghanistan had cordial bilateral relations and were often described as great friends. Since 2002, India had helped build several infrastructure projects as part of its promised development assistance program of over \$2 billion (later increased to \$3 billion). Considering India's investments in Afghanistan, the goodwill it enjoyed among common Afghans was understandable. However, it would be wrong to imply that these unique, multifaceted bilateral relations between the two countries were simply due to India's helping hand. This research paper is one of its kind attempt to explain the perceptions Afghans had about India based on the field survey done in Afghanistan in 2019. Using responses of over 321 Afghan participants, the paper attempts to quantitatively analyze the goodwill and positive vibes that India enticed among Afghans. However, many Afghans felt that India did not do enough during the crisis in August 2021. Based on the survey and the general perceptions of Afghans in the aftermath of the return of the Taliban, this paper argues that the soft power investments in Afghanistan helped India in its nation-branding, making it attractive and creating goodwill. However, New Delhi lacked the will to act smartly and hence did not get the desired strategic influences due to 'soft power behavior'.

Keywords: Afghanistan; Indo-Afghan relations; Soft Power; Diplomacy; Public Diplomacy

INTRODUCTION

Till August 1947, when British India was partitioned into two countries, India and Pakistan, the Durand line served as the porous border between Afghanistan and India. Geographically and even historically, these contiguous landmasses of Khurasan and South Asia have shared histories and empires. Hence, it is often pointed out that "imagining India without Afghanistan, and Afghanistan without India, is impossible" (Paliwal 2017, 29). Even after independence, the two countries had largely had cordial bilateral relations except for the "diplomatic blackhole" during the 1990s when the Taliban came to power for the first time (Paliwal 2017, 263). Commenting on the 'tangling lines of national interests', Louis Dupree had noted in 1962: "Muslim Afghanistan and Hindu India aligned against Muslim Pakistan; atheistic Communist China and Muslim Pakistan aligned against Hindu India and China and the Chinese

claims to parts of Nepal (including Mount Everest) may draw India and Nepal closer together (...)" (Dupree 1962).

Owing to the civil war, even as the largest number of Afghan refugees lived in Pakistan, it was seen as a hostile brother that kept fuelling the insurgency in contrast to India. Former President Hamid Karzai had once remarked that while Pakistan is a 'twin brother', India is a 'great friend'- *jigri dost* (Reyaz 2015).

No doubt, India was an important partner in the peace-building process in the war-torn country from 2002 onwards till August 2021, when the Taliban came back to power. New Delhi had provided aid as a development assistance program of over \$2 billion (later increased to 3 billion) as part of its peace-building measures. This included nearly 200 small, medium and mega projects, including Salma Dam in Herat, the parliament building in Kabul, a stadium and agriculture university in Kandahar, roads, and highways like Zaranj-Delaram, power transmission plants, a children hospital in Kabul, and scholarships to thousands of students under different schemes (Reyaz 2015). Two countries had even signed a strategic partnership agreement way back in 2011, strengthening bilateral relations. However, there remained a wide gap in understanding the role of soft power in influencing New Delhi's foreign policies in Afghanistan. Journalistic articles suggest that Afghanistan is a manifestation of 'soft-power victory' (Reyaz 2015), but there is a little available empirical study to substantiate those claims.

This paper is one of its kind attempt to explain the perceptions of Afghans about India based on the field survey in Afghanistan conducted in 2019. Using responses of over 321 Afghan participants from 25 provinces, the paper attempts to quantitatively analyze the goodwill and positive vibes that India entices among Afghans. As the return of the Taliban created a diplomatic crisis, many Afghans looked at India with hopes of a possible escape route but felt utterly disappointed at New Delhi's knee-jerk reactions. Taking Afghanistan as a case study, this paper thus deliberates on the limitations and challenges in over-reliance on soft power without actual strategic power influences on the ground or clear objectives.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: UNDERSTANDING SOFT POWER

Power is usually defined as forcing someone to do something that he would otherwise not do (Dahl 1957). This ability or power to force someone to do certain things has often been understood in the sense of coercion, or what we call 'hard power', like military strength, economic resources, etc. Consequently, the debate over international relations is often dominated by so-called high politics and hard power issues, including security, sovereignty, and trade. Arguing that "power over opinion is the third form of power", Carr (2016) noted that it is "not less essential for political purposes than military and economic power, and has always been closely associated with them" (p. 120). In other words, the "ability to force someone to do something" does not always have to be coercive and can be an attractive power that influences someone to do something. Consequently, the "proof of power lies not in resources but in the ability to change the behavior of states" (Nye 1990, 155).

The state's soft power is defined by its "ability to get preferred outcomes through the co-optive means of agenda-setting, persuasion, and attraction", distinct from hard power, which emanates from coercion and economic inducements (Nye 2011, 43). Nye's soft power is

connected to the 'three-dimensional power' of Lukes (1974) and the idea of 'structural power' of Jeffery Isaac (Gallarotti 2011, 29), as well as the 'policy of prestige' of Morgenthau (1997).

The three primary resources of soft power, according to Nye, are culture, political values, and foreign policies. Unlike coercive forces, soft power relies on an "attraction to shared values, and the justness and duty of contributing to the achievement of these values", and hence its resources are "associated with the co-optive end" (Nye 2004, 7). According to Nye (2011), there are three co-optive methods of public diplomacy, including "agenda-setting, persuasion, and attraction" (p. 16). "Attractiveness helps", according to Chitty (2017a), as it is "more in the vein of soft power to be captivated by compelling messages than to be captured and compelled" (p. 20). An important point of distinction is that "soft power does not belong to the government to the same degree that hard power does" (Nye 2004, 14).

Soft power needs to be understood not so much as the neo-realist approach but within the paradigm of neoliberalism and constructivism. Chitty (2017b) tries to locate the soft power debates in "the positivist and post-positivist moments of international relations" (p. 3). Brown (2017), meanwhile, elaborates on how the theory of soft power has offered "a way of talking about non-coercive modes of influence in international politics" (p. 37), thus giving an alternative explanation of policy discourse and consequently helping in "conceptualizing and practicing influence" (p. 37).

It needs to be pointed out here that cultural forms as a tool of soft power, or what is referred to as cultural diplomacy to influence public opinions and build goodwill among foreign nations, is not a new phenomenon. What Nye thus did was to try and explain the age-old practice in new terms. International politics often creates a "hazy power space" (Beck 2005, 339), requiring new innovative approaches. A "more rigorous and systematic analysis of the process of soft power" can help better understand this hazy power space (Gallarotti 2011, 25).

One, however, needs to be careful in overusing the term soft power lest it is reduced to redundancy by stretching it to an "empty catch-all term that means everything and therefore nothing" and to "almost unquestioned credibility and prominence" (Rawnsley 2016, 19). Moreover, excessive reliance on soft power can reduce a country to paper-tiger. Critics of soft power brush it aside rhetorically, stressing that "the trouble with soft power is that it is soft" (Ferguson 2003). Kugiel (2016) reminds us that "soft power is sometimes seen as a moral or idealistic policy, whereas, in reality, soft power does not necessitate morality" (p. 6). On the other hand, even if a country enjoys considerable goodwill but is not a strong economic or military power, does not extend the expected aid, or follows a policy of non-intervention, the goodwill generated is of little use in a pure realist sense of foreign policies. Kugiel (2016) further adds that more important than "soft power resources" is the "soft power behavior" (p. 11). Hence, soft power advocates often talk of the 'golden mean' by creating the right balance between hard and soft power in exerting its influence through what Nye later called "smart power" (Nye 2009).

DATA COLLECTION

This paper is based on the fieldwork conducted in Afghanistan in August-September 2019 as part of an ICSSR-IMPRESS sponsored project. This paper is largely quantitative and with a brief qualitative discussion in the Conclusion section. An exhaustive survey was done across 25

provinces with a questionnaire set comprising 65 questions besides collecting basic details. First, a pilot study was done with seven respondents in Kabul and based on their responses, some of the options for the multiple-choice questions were modified, besides adding a few sub-questions for clarity. The original questionnaire set was prepared in English and was translated into two languages most spoken in Afghanistan - Pashto, and Dari - a dialect of Persian. With the help of local field workers, data from over three hundred respondents (321) were collected using the open-source data collection platform Kobo. Respondents could choose the language with a click of a button. Some responses were also collected by sending the URL via email or other online platforms, particularly from those Afghans now living abroad.

Table 1: Province-wide Distribution of Respondents (Source: Authors' depiction)

S.N	Province/Place	Number of Respondents
1	Balkh	60
2	Badakhshan	4
3	Baghlan	1
4	Samangan	21
5	Bamiyan	7
6	Daykundi	1
7	Faryab	12
8	Ghazni	13
9	Herat	10
10	Takhar	3
11	Jowzjan	10
12	Nangarhar	40
13	Kabul	40
14	Kandahar	1
15	Khost	2
16	Kunar	12
17	Kunduz	2
18	Laghman	51
19	Logar	5
20	Wardak	6
21	Nuristan	1
22	Paktia	1
23	Paktika	1
24	Qarabagh	1
25	Sar-i-pul	6
26	Washington	1
27	London	2
28		7
	Total	321

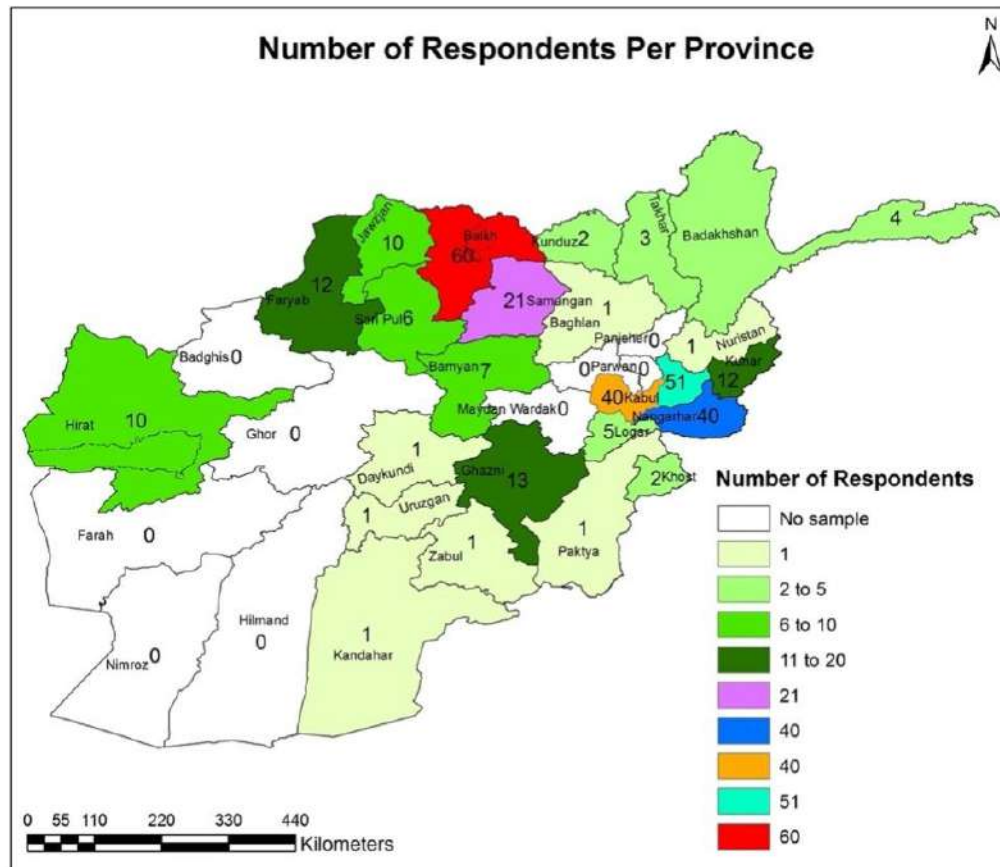


Figure 1: Province-wide Distribution of Respondents (Source: Afghanistan's province-level shapefile has been used from the Texas GeoData portal by The University of Texas at Austin (2020). Dr. Mehebab Sahana in ArcGIS software has prepared the map)

At the analysis stage, responses in Pashto and Dari were first translated and then cleaned to avoid any discrepancy. It was found that different spellings were used even when responses were in English, names of cities, provinces, ethnicities, and several other answers. Consequently, the number of rows was too many, and hence those with different spellings (for example, Kabol, Cabul, Kabul, kabul, etc. were all clubbed as 'Kabul'). Similarly, Pashtun, Pushtun, Pashtoon, Pashto (in the ethnic column), etc., were clubbed as 'Pashtun'). After cleaning the data, those were analyzed using the software 'R'.

Acknowledging Afghanistan's geographical and ethnic diversity, data from at least a few respondents from 25 provinces (out of 34) have been collected (Table 1 and Figure 1). Out of 321 respondents, 212 samples have been collected from 5 provinces - Balkh (60), Laghman (51), Kabul (40), Nangarhar (40), and Samangan (21). Seven respondents preferred not to mention their locations.

Table 2: Ethnic Distribution of Respondents (Source: Authors' depiction)

Characteristic	N = 321 ¹
new_ethnicity	
Afghan	18 (5.8%)
Hazara	49 (16%)
Other	5 (1.6%)
Pasthun	135 (43%)
Tajik	64 (20%)
Uzbek	42 (13%)

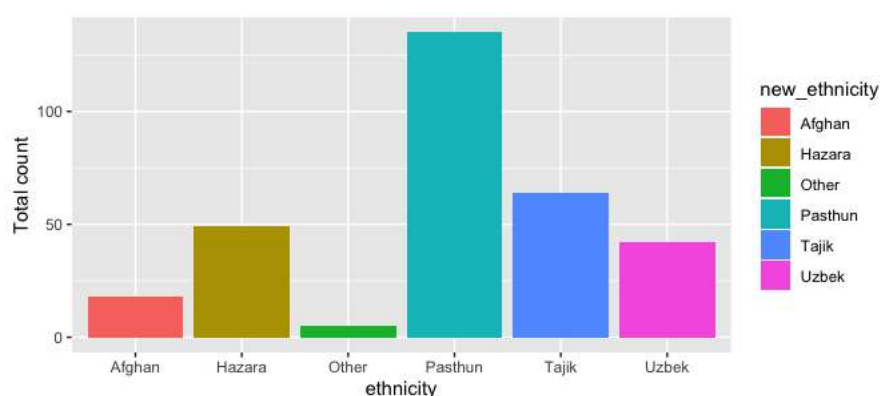


Figure 2: Ethnic Distribution of Respondents (Source: Authors' depiction)

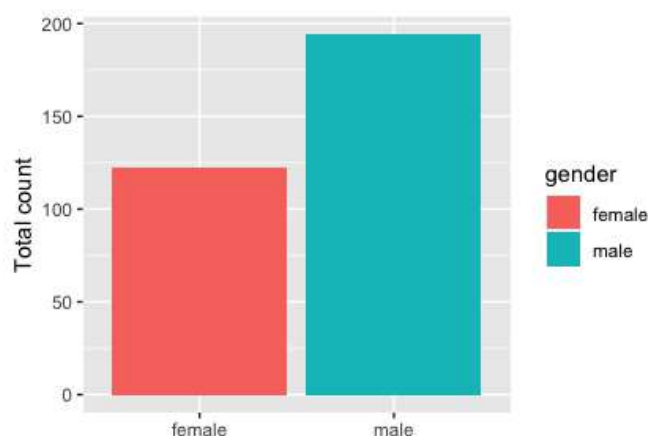


Figure 3: Gender-wide Distribution of Respondents (Source: Authors' depiction)

In terms of ethnic breakout (Table 2 and Figure 2), out of 321, 135 respondents (43%) were Pashtuns, 64 (20%) were Tajiks, 49 (16%) were Hazaras, and 42 (13%) were Uzbeks. Eighteen respondents (5.8%) preferred to write 'Afghan' as their ethnicity instead of identifying as Pashtuns. It should be noted here that although historically Afghans and Pashtuns have

meant the same thing, we cannot say with surety if these Afghans are Pashtuns only or belong to any other community but prefer to call themselves Afghans, referring to their nationality. 194 (60%) respondents were males, while 122 (38%) were female, while five respondents chose not to reveal their gender (Figure 3). As only 316 respondents declared their gender, in the analysis below, effectively 316 is taken as the sample size instead of 321 to see how males and females responded.

Table 3: Age Distribution of Respondents (Source: Authors' depiction)

	Freq	%	% Cum.
above50	8	2.56	2.56
Below20	23	7.37	9.94
between21&35	226	72.44	82.37
Between36&50	55	17.63	100.00

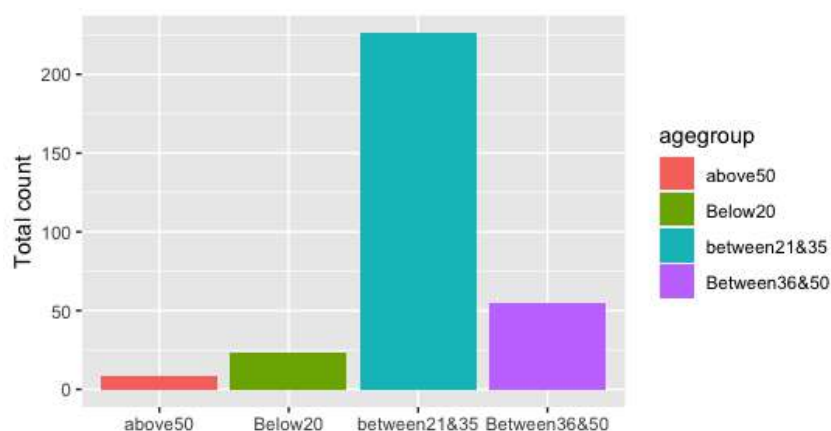


Figure 4: Age Distribution of Respondents (Source: Authors' depiction)

Table 4: Educational Qualifications of Respondents (Source: Authors' depiction)

Characteristic	Overall, N = 316 [†]	female, N = 122 [†]	male, N = 194 [†]
Level of Education			
graduate	193 (61%)	65 (53%)	128 (66%)
illiterate	34 (11%)	29 (24%)	5 (2.6%)
postgraduateabove	36 (11%)	9 (7.4%)	27 (14%)
seniorsecondary	46 (15%)	17 (14%)	29 (15%)
Student	1 (0.3%)	0 (0%)	1 (0.5%)
tillsceondary	5 (1.6%)	2 (1.6%)	3 (1.6%)

[†] Statistics presented: n (%)

Primary Survey on case of Stake of Indias Soft Power, Afganistan 2019

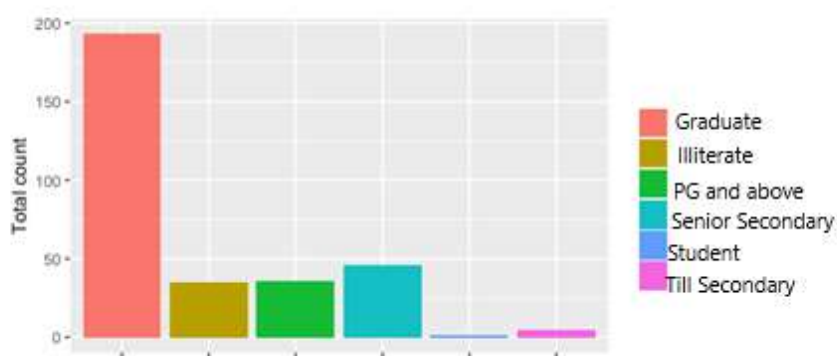


Figure 5: Educational Qualifications of Respondents (Source: Authors' depiction)

The population of Afghanistan is one of the youngest, with 63% of the population below 25. Maximum respondents (226 out of 321) chosen for the survey were between 21 and 35 years of age (72.4%), while those between 36 and 50 comprised 17.63% of the respondents (55). Respondents above 50 or below 20 were only 8 and 23, respectively (Table 3 & Figure 4). Finally, in terms of the educational qualifications of the respondents (Table 4 & Figure 5), overall, 61% of respondents were graduates, while 11% more were post-graduates. 15% of respondents were high school pass-outs, while 11% (34) were illiterates, and the field workers read questions to them and recorded their responses.

The main objective of the survey was to understand the following aspects broadly:

- What is the perception of Afghans about India? Do they see India as a good friend, merely as a strategic partner or an enemy?
- What kind of experiences has shaped the perceptions of Afghans regarding India?
- What is his/her contact/experience with India? Have they traveled to India and other countries?
- What are their opinions on Indian film, serials, and music?
- How relevant is the Indian entertainment industry in this context?
- What role do scholarships to Afghan students and education in India play in shaping their opinion and perceptions?
- How significant are the development projects?
- What role did medical tourism to India play?
- How has cooperation in the field of sports contributed to building goodwill?
- How does India perform when the perception of Afghans about India is compared with Pakistan, Turkey, etc.?
- Did the India-Afghanistan bilateral ties improve under PM Modi, or their opinions about India has changed over the years?

Findings

38% of the respondents had visited India at least once (Table 5 and Figure 6), while 41% of respondents have traveled to other countries (Table 6). Afghans generally have a very positive image of Afghanistan, and hence many of them look forward to traveling to India. However, there seems to be a mismatch between their imagination of India and their expectations of the realities. 44% of the respondents feel that when they or their family members visit India, their experience is never according to their expectations, while 32% said it is sometimes so (Table 7). Only 24% of the respondents seemed satisfied with their experience in India. However, when they compare their experience in India with other foreign countries, almost half of them (49%) have a positive rating for India, while another half (47%) have a neutral view (Table 8).

Table 5: Whether ever visited India? (Source: Authors' depiction)

Characteristic	no	yes	Total
gender			
female	82 (26%)	40 (13%)	122 (39%)
male	115 (36%)	79 (25%)	194 (61%)
Total	197 (62%)	119 (38%)	316 (100%)

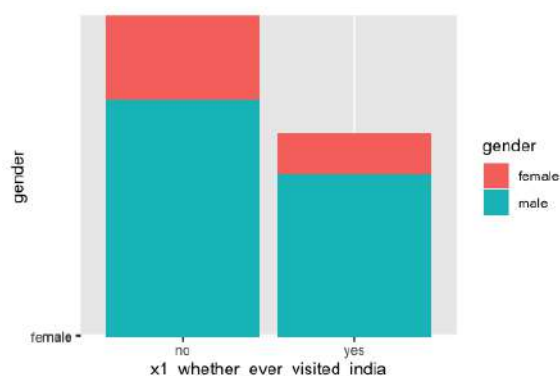


Figure 6: Whether ever visited India? (Source: Authors' depiction)

Table 6: Whether ever visited countries other than India? (Source: Authors' depiction)

	visitedbeyondindia		
Characteristic	no	yes	Total
gender			
female	67 (22%)	41 (14%)	108 (36%)
male	112 (37%)	82 (27%)	194 (64%)
Total	179 (59%)	123 (41%)	302 (100%)

Table 7: When you visit India, is your experience according to your expectations?

(Source: Authors' depiction)

Characteristic	Overall, N = 316 [†]	female, N = 122 [†]	male, N = 194 [†]
never	101 (44%)	34 (45%)	67 (44%)
sometimes	72 (32%)	27 (36%)	45 (30%)
yes	55 (24%)	15 (20%)	40 (26%)

[†] Statistics presented: n (%)

Table 8: How would you compare your experience about India with other countries?

(Source: Authors' depiction)

How would you compare your experience about India with other countries?			
Characteristic	Overall, N = 316 [†]	female, N = 122 [†]	male, N = 194 [†]
negative	7 (3.2%)	2 (2.8%)	5 (3.4%)
neutral	103 (47%)	36 (50%)	67 (46%)
positive	73 (34%)	26 (36%)	47 (32%)
very_negative	1 (0.5%)	0 (0%)	1 (0.7%)
very_positive	33 (15%)	8 (11%)	25 (17%)

[†] Statistics presented: n (%)

New Delhi seemed to be the most popular place in India for most Afghans, which is understandable (Figure 7). Being the capital, and with 3-4 daily direct flights from Kabul alone, it is often the first entry point (Mumbai's only second option). With some of the country's top public universities and several private universities in the National Capital Region, top-notch private hospitals, and some of the most famous historical monuments. When asked to name the favorite place in India, 13.7% of respondents (44 persons) said either Delhi or New Delhi, with Goa being the second most favorite place, with 10.59% of Afghans calling it their favorite place. It should be noted here that Goa is particularly popular among Afghan male travelers who come for holidays. Mumbai, Agra, Mangalore, and Hyderabad are other favorite destinations for Afghans in India (Figure 7).

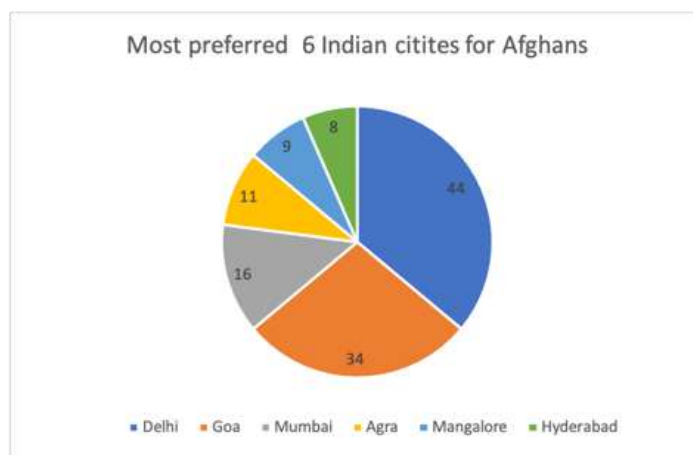


Figure 7: Most Preferred Indian Cities for Afghans (Source: Authors' depiction)

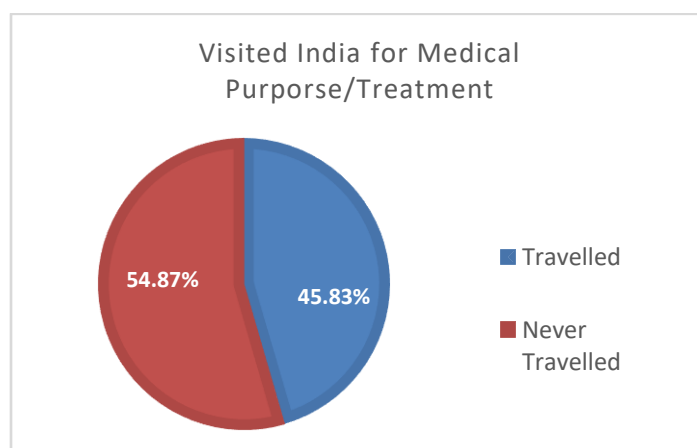


Figure 8: Have you or anyone in your family visited India for medical treatment? (Source: Authors' depiction)

Table 9: How was your experience of medical services in India? (Source: Authors' depiction)

How was your Medical Services experience in India			
Characteristic	Overall, N = 316 [†]	female, N = 122 [†]	male, N = 194 [†]
neutral	76 (36%)	21 (30%)	55 (38%)
satisfied	58 (27%)	25 (36%)	33 (23%)
unsatisfied	6 (2.8%)	1 (1.4%)	5 (3.5%)
very_satisfied	72 (34%)	23 (33%)	49 (34%)
very_unsatisfi	1 (0.5%)	0 (0%)	1 (0.7%)

[†] Statistics presented: n (%)

Table 10: How was your experience with a taxi, hotel, and the allied hospitality industry?

(Source: Authors' depiction)

How was your experience with taxi, hotel and the allied hospitality industry?			
Characteristic	Overall, N = 316 [†]	female, N = 122 [†]	male, N = 194 [†]
neutral	22 (17%)	9 (18%)	13 (16%)
satisfied	55 (42%)	18 (37%)	37 (45%)
unsatisfied	12 (9.1%)	3 (6.1%)	9 (11%)
very_satisfied	39 (30%)	17 (35%)	22 (27%)
very_unsatisfi	4 (3.0%)	2 (4.1%)	2 (2.4%)

[†] Statistics presented: n (%)

Table 11: How likely are you to recommend fellow Afghans to India for health treatment?

(Source: Authors' depiction)

How likely are you to recommend fellow Afghans to go to India for health treatment?			
Characteristic	Overall, N = 316 [†]	female, N = 122 [†]	male, N = 194 [†]
likely	122 (44%)	45 (50%)	77 (41%)
not_sure	56 (20%)	14 (16%)	42 (23%)
unlikely	8 (2.9%)	2 (2.2%)	6 (3.2%)
very_likely	88 (32%)	28 (31%)	60 (32%)
very_unlikely	2 (0.7%)	1 (1.1%)	1 (0.5%)

[†] Statistics presented: n (%)

Private hospitals in Delhi are also the first choice of many Afghans looking for treatment. Medical tourism was an important part of bilateral relations. Between 2017 and 2020 alone, about 100 thousand Afghans traveled to India on medical visas for health check-ups and treatment (Bhushan 2020). 45.8% of the respondents said that they or someone in their families had traveled to India for medical reasons (Figure 8). The medical services in India got a 61% approval rating (34% very satisfied and 27% satisfied), while only 3.3% of them seemed to be unsatisfied (Table 9).

Similarly, 72% of the respondents said they or their family members had an overall positive experience with the allied hospitality services like guest houses, transportation, etc., during their stay in India (Table 10). About 12 percent of them had an unsatisfactory experience, and another 17 percent were neutral. Consequently, 76% of respondents said they would recommend fellow Afghans for medical treatment in India (32% very likely, and 44% likely) (Table 11).

Entertainment

Indian films, primarily Bollywood's Hindi films, are quite popular among Afghans. Overall, 59% of the respondents said that Indian/Hindi films are their first choice for entertainment, while 20% said they would like to watch more Afghan films (Table 12). It should be added that Indian films remain the second preferred option. Alternatively, when probed further, they agree that although they would like to see more Afghan films due to a lack of options, it is Indian films they fall back to. Hollywood and English films are the next options, with 12% of people considering them the first choice. Most of this third category of respondents are educated and city-based. When probed further, it was revealed that Hindi/Indian films are the next best option even for them. What was surprising was that despite linguistic and cultural affinities, Iranian films do not seem to have many takers in Afghanistan. The small caveat to this observation should be that the responses from provinces bordering Iran are too limited to make a conclusive argument favoring the last point.

Like films, Indian serials remain most popular among Afghans, with common Afghans preferring them even over indigenously made series. Overall, 31% of respondents said that Indian drama series are their first choice, with country-made series occupying the second spot at 22% (Table 13). Turkish serials or Dizis have emerged quite popular in the last few years, with 20% of respondents calling it their first choice, while English drama occupies the fourth spot, with 19% of respondents terming them as the first choice. Interestingly, despite linguistic and cultural similarities, Iranian serials are way behind. Only 6 % of Afghans consider them their first choice, and Pakistani TV drama is preferred by less than three percent of the respondents (2.5%). Significantly, while TV drama in India mostly caters to the women population, the male-female ratio for TV series (including Indian serials) is not very different in Afghanistan. While 33% of women regarded Indian serials as their first choice, the data for men was 30%.

Table 12: Films from which of the following countries do you prefer to watch more?
(Source: Authors' depiction)

Which Countries film do you prefer to watch more?				
Characteristic	Overall, N = 321 [†]	****, N = 5 [†]	female, N = 122 [†]	male, N = 194 [†]
First Preference				
AFGANISTHAN	63 (20%)	1 (20%)	21 (17%)	41 (21%)
ENGLISH	39 (12%)	1 (20%)	13 (11%)	25 (13%)
INDIA	189 (59%)	3 (60%)	73 (60%)	113 (58%)
IRAN	8 (2.5%)	0 (0%)	6 (4.9%)	2 (1.0%)
PAKISTAN	6 (1.9%)	0 (0%)	1 (0.8%)	5 (2.6%)
TURKEY	16 (5.0%)	0 (0%)	8 (6.6%)	8 (4.1%)

[†] Statistics presented: n (%)

Table 13: Serials from which of the following countries/region do you prefer to watch more?

(Source: Authors' depiction)

Serials from among which of the following countries/region do you prefer to watch more?			
Characteristic	Overall, N = 316 [†]	female, N = 122 [†]	male, N = 194 [†]
First Choice			
afghanistan	69 (22%)	22 (18%)	47 (24%)
english	60 (19%)	23 (19%)	37 (19%)
india	98 (31%)	40 (33%)	58 (30%)
iran	19 (6.0%)	13 (11%)	6 (3.1%)
pakistan	8 (2.5%)	2 (1.6%)	6 (3.1%)
turkey	62 (20%)	22 (18%)	40 (21%)

[†] Statistics presented: n (%)

Source: Primary Survey on Stake of Indian's Soft Power: Case Study of Afghanistan 2019

Table 14: Do you think your perception of India has anything to do with Hindi films and serials?

(Source: Authors' depiction)

Do you think your perception about India has anything to do with Hindi films and serials?			
Characteristic	Overall, N = 316 [†]	female, N = 122 [†]	male, N = 194 [†]
agree	114 (39%)	40 (40%)	74 (39%)
disagree	32 (11%)	13 (13%)	19 (9.9%)
neutral	78 (27%)	28 (28%)	50 (26%)
strongly_agree	61 (21%)	18 (18%)	43 (22%)
strongly_disag	6 (2.1%)	0 (0%)	6 (3.1%)

[†] Statistics presented: n (%)

Table 15: Do you know Urdu/Hindi/Hindustani language?

(Source: Authors' depiction)

Characteristic	Overall, N = 316 [†]	female, N = 122 [†]	male, N = 194 [†]
Do you Know Urdu/ Hindi language			
fluently	41 (15%)	9 (9.7%)	32 (18%)
hardly	164 (61%)	66 (71%)	98 (55%)
understand_and_can_speak_a_lit	65 (24%)	18 (19%)	47 (27%)

[†] Statistics presented: n (%)

Table 16: How did you learn Urdu/Hindi/Hindustani language?

(Source: Authors' depiction)

Characteristic	Overall, N = 316 [†]	female, N = 122 [†]	male, N = 194 [†]
Grew up in Pakistan	9 (8.5%)	1 (3.7%)	8 (10%)
Studied in India	27 (25%)	7 (26%)	20 (25%)
From Watching Films & Serials	72 (68%)	20 (74%)	52 (66%)

[†] Statistics presented: n (%)

60% of Afghans also agree that the Indian entertainment industry has largely shaped their positive perceptions of India, while only about 13% disagree (Table 14). 27% of them have no opinion on it. About 15 percent of respondents acknowledged that they are fluent in Hindustani/Hindi/Urdu language, while another 24 percent said they understand and can speak a little too (Table 15).

Interestingly, 39% of Afghans said they at least understand (or can even speak fluently) Hindi/Urdu; twice as many are males - 45% male against 28.7% female. Of them, 68% of Afghans said they picked up the language from watching Indian films and serials (Table 16). 25% of them picked up the language during their stay in India for educational purposes, while only 8.5% said they learned the Urdu language as they grew up in Pakistan. The data for both males and females on how they picked up the Urdu/Hindi language is almost the same.

Some recent films like 'Kesari', 'Panipat', 'Padmavat', etc., have negative characters of Afghans. 32% of the Afghans surveyed agreed that 'these are films, enjoy, why to take them so seriously', while 16% acknowledged that 'negative stereotypes of Muslims are used in films everywhere' (Table 17). However, 28% said that such vilification of Afghan historical figures 'does not bode well with goodwill India-Afghanistan share'. Another 24% expressed concerns that these can be 'detrimental to Indo-Afghan relations'.

Table 17: Some recent films like 'Kesari', 'Panipat', 'Padmavat', etc. have negative characters of Afghans. How do you react when you watch those films? (Source: Authors' depiction)

Characteristic	Overall, N = 316 [†]	female, N = 122 [†]	male, N = 194 [†]
Some films like Kesari, Panipat, Padmavat, etc. have negative characters of Afghans, how do you react when you watch those films?			
detrimental_to	62 (24%)	25 (28%)	37 (21%)
does_not_bode_	73 (28%)	24 (27%)	49 (28%)
negative_stere	43 (16%)	9 (10%)	34 (20%)
these_are_film	84 (32%)	30 (34%)	54 (31%)

[†] Statistics presented: n (%)

Table 18: Do you like wearing Indian ethnic clothes? (Source: Authors' depiction)

Characteristic	Overall, N = 316 [†]	female, N = 122 [†]	male, N = 194 [†]
Do you like Indian/Ethnic Cloths?			
frequently	28 (10%)	8 (8.7%)	20 (11%)
never	141 (51%)	36 (39%)	105 (56%)
sometimes	110 (39%)	48 (52%)	62 (33%)
[†] Statistics presented: n (%)			

Table 19: Do you like to eat Indian cuisine/food? (Source: Authors' depiction)

Characteristic	Overall, N = 316 [†]	female, N = 122 [†]	male, N = 194 [†]
Do you like Indian cuisine/food?			
frequently	71 (25%)	29 (31%)	42 (22%)
never	100 (35%)	29 (31%)	71 (37%)
sometime	112 (40%)	35 (38%)	77 (41%)
[†] Statistics presented: n (%)			

Table 20: India has a lot of goodwill and is seen as Afghanistan's friend. Do you agree? (Source: Authors' depiction)

Characteristic	Overall, N = 316 [†]	female, N = 122 [†]	male, N = 194 [†]
India has lot of Friends?			
agree	148 (53%)	54 (60%)	94 (49%)
disagree	12 (4.3%)	3 (3.3%)	9 (4.7%)
neutral	51 (18%)	12 (13%)	39 (21%)
strongly_agree	66 (24%)	21 (23%)	45 (24%)
strongly_disag	3 (1.1%)	0 (0%)	3 (1.6%)
[†] Statistics presented: n (%)			

The influence of Indian films and serials on Afghan dressing style and the cultural similarities can be seen in that 39% of Afghans said they like to wear ethnic Indian clothes sometimes. 10% of them said they frequently wear them (Table 18). More Afghan females (52+8.7=60.7%) are likely to try ethnic Indian dresses than males, which is understandable as most urban men anyway wear western dresses themselves in India. Similarly, 40 percent of respondents said they like to eat Indian food sometimes, while 25 percent said they often eat them (Table 19). Many Afghan restaurants serve some popular 'Indian dishes', which are spicier than common Afghan food. It is catering to this demand that an Afghan entrepreneur had opened a take-away service in Kabul and has hired an Indian cook.

Almost a quarter of respondents (24%) strongly agree that India enjoys much goodwill in Afghanistan; another 53% also affirm it (Table 20). Thus about 77 percent of respondents view India-Afghanistan relations positively, while only 5.4% disagree, with 18% of Afghans having neutral views on Indo-Afghan relations. Interestingly, many more women have positive views about India than men, with 83% of women agreeing that India enjoys goodwill in Afghanistan against 73% of men. 36% of respondents strongly agreed, and another 41% agreed (a total of 77%) that India's investment in development projects has some role in this positive image (Table 21). The USA and other Western countries also have many development projects in Afghanistan, but why has India gotten so much goodwill while the USA is disliked? While 40% of Afghans surveyed noted that India does not have a military presence, another 38% reminded us that India does not interfere in their politics (Table 22). 30% said that India has been Afghanistan's good friend and has no hidden agenda, while 21% agreed that shared history and cultural similarities also play important roles.

Table 21: Do you think India's investment in development projects has some role in this positive image?
(Source: Authors' depiction)

Characteristic	Overall, N = 316 [†]	female, N = 122 [†]	male, N = 194 [†]
Do you think its a Positive image?			
agree	116 (41%)	45 (50%)	71 (37%)
disagree	12 (4.3%)	4 (4.4%)	8 (4.2%)
neutral	52 (19%)	12 (13%)	40 (21%)
strongly_agree	100 (36%)	29 (32%)	71 (37%)
strongly_disag	1 (0.4%)	0 (0%)	1 (0.5%)
[†] Statistics presented: n (%)			

Table 22: USA and Western countries also have many development projects here, but why has India got so much goodwill while the USA is disliked? (Source: Authors' depiction)

USA and Western countries also have lot of development projects here, but why has India got so much goodwill while USA is disliked?			
Characteristic	Overall, N = 316 [†]	female, N = 122 [†]	male, N = 194 [†]
India does not interfere in our politics	103 (38%)	38 (43%)	65 (36%)
India has Military Presence	106 (40%)	24 (27%)	82 (46%)
Share History & Culture	55 (21%)	20 (23%)	35 (19%)
They are good friends and no hidden agenda	81 (30%)	26 (30%)	55 (31%)
[†] Statistics presented: n (%)			

Education

78% of the respondents have heard and known about the scholarships that the Indian government offers to Afghan students (Table 23). 36% of the respondents said that either they or someone in their family has benefited from scholarships or some short-term training programs offered by India (Table 24). Further, 56% of the respondents said that, given an opportunity, they would like to avail the facility and come to India for higher education. In comparison, only 12% were not interested (the rest 32% were not sure) (Table 25).

Table 23: Do you know if India gives any scholarships to Afghan students?

(Source: Authors' depiction)

Characteristic	Overall, N = 316 [†]	female, N = 122 [†]	male, N = 194 [†]
Do you know if India gives any scholarships to Afghan students?	218 (78%)	75 (83%)	143 (76%)
[†] Statistics presented: n (%)			

Table 24: Are you or anyone in your family beneficiary of the scholarship scheme from the Indian government? (Source: Authors' depiction)

Are you or anyone in your family beneficiary of scholarship scheme from Indian Government?			
Characteristic	Overall, N = 316 [†]	female, N = 122 [†]	male, N = 194 [†]
	101 (36%)	32 (36%)	69 (36%)
[†] Statistics presented: n (%)			

Table 25: If you are given an opportunity to study in India, would you like to go?

(Source: Authors' depiction)

If you are given an opportunity to study in India would you like to go?			
Characteristic	Overall, N = 316 [†]	female, N = 122 [†]	male, N = 194 [†]
maybe	90 (32%)	34 (38%)	56 (30%)
no	34 (12%)	10 (11%)	24 (13%)
yes	155 (56%)	46 (51%)	109 (58%)
[†] Statistics presented: n (%)			

Cultural Linkages

At least 51% of respondents believed - 38% agreed while 13% strongly agreed - that cricket has become the new uniting factor, especially with Afghan players now participating in the Indian Premier League (IPL). 35% of them had a neutral view of this (Table 26). Besides films, serials, cricket, scholarships, and aid, other things unite Afghans and India. 59% of the Afghans

surveyed agreed that the two countries shared history and culture are an important uniting factor (Table 27). 21% of respondents attribute the special bonds the two countries share to the Sufis and Khanqahs, while another 16% remind that they both share the same Deobandi School of Jurisprudence. The rest, 14%, attributed it to other factors. Consequently, 55% of Afghans see India as a friend, while 22% see it as a strategic partner (Table 28). 21% were neutral, and only 2.5% of them saw India either as a spoiler or an enemy.

Table 26: Do you agree that cricket has become the new uniting factor, especially with Afghan players participating in the Indian Premier League (IPL)? (Source: Authors' depiction)

Characteristic	Overall, N = 316 [†]	female, N = 122 [†]	male, N = 194 [†]
Do you agree that Cricket has become the new uniting factor, especially with Afghan players now participating in Indian Premiere League (IPL)?			
agree	105 (38%)	36 (38%)	69 (38%)
disagree	26 (9.5%)	9 (9.6%)	17 (9.4%)
neutral	97 (35%)	35 (37%)	62 (34%)
strongly_agree	36 (13%)	8 (8.5%)	28 (15%)
strongly_disag	11 (4.0%)	6 (6.4%)	5 (2.8%)

[†] Statistics presented: n (%)

Table 27: Besides films, serials, cricket, scholarships, and aid, what other things unite Afghans and India? (Source: Authors' depiction)

Besides films, serials, cricket, scholarships and aid, what other things unite Afghans and India?			
Characteristic	Overall, N = 316 [†]	female, N = 122 [†]	male, N = 194 [†]
Shared History & Culture	161 (59%)	53 (58%)	108 (59%)
Deobandi School of Jurisprudence	45 (16%)	16 (17%)	29 (16%)
Sufism & Khanqah	57 (21%)	19 (21%)	38 (21%)
Others	39 (14%)	14 (15%)	25 (14%)

[†] Statistics presented: n (%)

Table 28: How do you characterize India vis-à-vis Afghanistan? (Source: Authors' depiction)

How do you charecterised India & Afganistan			
Characteristic	Overall, N = 316 [†]	female, N = 122 [†]	male, N = 194 [†]
enemy	2 (0.7%)	0 (0%)	2 (1.0%)
friend	156 (55%)	50 (54%)	106 (55%)
neutral	59 (21%)	20 (22%)	39 (20%)
spoiler	5 (1.8%)	2 (2.2%)	3 (1.6%)
strategic_part	62 (22%)	20 (22%)	42 (22%)

[†] Statistics presented: n (%)

India is the largest democracy globally, with a huge Muslim population. For multi-ethnic Afghanistan, 72 percent of respondents (29% very strongly and 43% strongly) agree that India

can be a good model to emulate. In comparison, less than 3% disagree, with 25% having a neutral view on the subject (Table 29). About 47% of Afghans think India can teach Pakistan, their common enemy, lessons, while over 24% (including those who strongly disagree) disagree with it (Table 30). However, 42% of respondents disagree with the repeated accusation by Pakistan that India uses Afghanistan as a base for creating troubles across Durand Line, although 37% of them also agree (31) (Table 31). 22% have no opinion on the subject.

About 67% of respondents agreed - including a quarter who strongly agreed - that under Prime Minister Narendra Modi, India has come closer to Afghanistan, while less than 10 percent disagreed (Table 32). PM Modi was awarded the Amir Amanullah Khan Award, Afghanistan's highest civilian honor, on 4 June 2016 when he visited the country for the second time (the first trip was in 2015 to inaugurate the new parliament building) to inaugurate the Salma Dam. PM Modi and his party, the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), are often projected as anti-Muslims in India. However, almost half of the respondents (49%) consider it 'India's internal matter', while another 29% suggest Afghanistan has its internal problems to bother first (Table 33).

Table 29: India is considered the largest democracy in the world. With its huge Muslim population, do you think India can be a model for multi-ethnic Afghanistan? (Source: Authors' depiction)

India is considered as the largest democracy in the world, do you think India with huge Muslim population can be a model for multi-ethnic Afghanistan?			
Characteristic	Overall, N = 316 ¹	female, N = 122 ¹	male, N = 194 ¹
agree	123 (43%)	43 (47%)	80 (42%)
disagree	7 (2.5%)	3 (3.3%)	4 (2.1%)
neutral	71 (25%)	19 (21%)	52 (27%)
strongly_agree	81 (29%)	27 (29%)	54 (28%)
strongly_disag	1 (0.4%)	0 (0%)	1 (0.5%)

¹ Statistics presented: n (%)

Table 30: Like Afghanistan, India sees Pakistan as an enemy state. Would you agree that you like India because you think it can teach Pakistan lessons? (Source: Authors' depiction)

Like Afghanistan, India also sees Pakistan as enemy state. Would you agree that you like India because you think, it can teach Pakistan lessons? (Enemy's enemy is a friend?)			
Characteristic	Overall, N = 316 ¹	female, N = 122 ¹	male, N = 194 ¹
agree	82 (29%)	25 (27%)	57 (30%)
disagree	49 (17%)	18 (20%)	31 (16%)
neutral	81 (29%)	27 (29%)	54 (28%)
strongly_agree	51 (18%)	12 (13%)	39 (20%)
strongly_disag	20 (7.1%)	10 (11%)	10 (5.2%)

¹ Statistics presented: n (%)

Table 31: Pakistan often accuses India of using Afghanistan as a base for creating troubles across the Durand Line. Do you agree? (Source: Authors' depiction)

Pakistan often accuses India of using Afghanistan as base for creating troubles across Durand Line. Do you agree?			
Characteristic	Overall, N = 316 ⁷	female, N = 122 ⁷	male, N = 194 ⁷
agree	61 (22%)	26 (29%)	35 (18%)
disagree	70 (25%)	27 (30%)	43 (22%)
neutral	61 (22%)	15 (17%)	46 (24%)
strongly_agree	43 (15%)	13 (14%)	30 (16%)
strongly_disag	47 (17%)	9 (10%)	38 (20%)

⁷ Statistics presented: n (%)

Table 32: Do you think India has come closer to Afghanistan under PM Narendra Modi? (Source: Authors' depiction)

Do you think, under PM Narendra Modi, India has come closer to Afghanistan?			
Characteristic	Overall, N = 316 ⁷	female, N = 122 ⁷	male, N = 194 ⁷
agree	112 (40%)	38 (43%)	74 (39%)
disagree	17 (6.1%)	2 (2.2%)	15 (7.9%)
neutral	67 (24%)	19 (21%)	48 (25%)
strongly_agree	75 (27%)	25 (28%)	50 (26%)
strongly_disag	9 (3.2%)	5 (5.6%)	4 (2.1%)

⁷ Statistics presented: n (%)

Table 33: In India, PM Narendra Modi and his party are often anti-Muslims. Does that impact your perception about India? (Source: Authors' depiction)

In India PM Narendra Modi and his party is often projected as anti-Muslims, does that impact your perception about India?			
Characteristic	Overall, N = 316 ⁷	female, N = 122 ⁷	male, N = 194 ⁷
India's internal matter	131 (49%)	44 (49%)	87 (48%)
Afghanistan has own internal problems	79 (29%)	26 (29%)	53 (29%)
India has always stood by Afghanistan	47 (17%)	16 (18%)	31 (17%)
Yes, it gives a negative perception	52 (19%)	19 (21%)	33 (18%)

⁷ Statistics presented: n (%)

Table 34: Do you think a peace deal with the Taliban will negatively affect India-Afghan relations?

(Source: Authors' depiction)

Do you think peace deal with Taliban will have any adverse effect on India-Afghan relations (Taliban is seen as pro-Pakistan)?			
Characteristic	Overall, N = 316 [†]	female, N = 122 [†]	male, N = 194 [†]
agree	76 (27%)	21 (23%)	55 (28%)
disagree	55 (19%)	22 (24%)	33 (17%)
neutral	100 (35%)	32 (35%)	68 (35%)
strongly agree	28 (9.9%)	9 (9.9%)	19 (9.8%)
strongly disag	25 (8.8%)	7 (7.7%)	18 (9.3%)

[†] Statistics presented: n (%)

Only 19% of the Afghan respondents agreed that such actions give India a negative image. In comparison, 17% more Afghans reminded that India has been an all-weather friend of Afghanistan and has always stood by them, suggesting that they will not speak on India's internal matter lest it affects the bilateral relations. Finally, about 37 percent of respondents agreed that the peace deal with the Taliban would harm India-Afghan relations. In comparison, about 28% of them think that the two countries are too close and that the deal would not have any adverse impact (Table 34).

CONCLUSION

Our analysis is a testimony that Afghanistan presented a soft power victory for India regarding nation-branding and enjoying goodwill among political elites and the masses. Owing to the staple consumption of Indian films and serials, common Afghans have a very positive and nostalgic image of India. Those Afghans who visit India for education and medical tourism purposes are enamored by the rapid development, besides India's relative peace and stability. Interestingly, about two-thirds of Afghans (72%) considered India's pluralistic and federal Indian structure a good model to emulate (see Table 29). What is even more interesting is that even when some negative reports concerning the Indian government, like their alleged human rights violations or mistreatment of minorities, were pointed out, almost half of the respondents (49%) considered it 'India's internal matter' (Table 33). About 77% of respondents viewed India-Afghanistan relations positively (see Table 20). It is interesting to note that India's investments were minuscule compared to the USA and some other western countries. Still, India got a much higher approval rating (see Table 22).

Education, scholarships, police and military training, and other exchange programs helped India make allies and friends in Afghanistan. The number of scholarships that the Indian government offers to UG, PG, and PhD students has helped India cultivate allies in Afghanistan. During the fieldwork, the project director - lead author - met ministers in the government, senior government officials, civil society activists, media professionals, etc., in the government who studied or received training in India. In 2019, when the lead-author visited Afghanistan

before the election, not just the then Education Minister, Dr. Mirwais Balkhi, and the Deputy Minister of Education Marjan Matin were both alumni of Indian universities. Dr. Balkhi studied bachelor's at the University of Delhi and later shifted to Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), where he completed his PhD. Ms. Matin had studied bachelor at Punjab University and completed her master's from JNU. Many alumni of Indian universities and institutions were working in important and influential positions, and they could be important soft power assets in the future. Thus, Afghanistan represented a victory of India's soft power, so it appeared till 2021 when the Taliban inched closer to Kabul each day.

Limitations of Soft Power Policy

While both Indian and Afghan diplomats did not get tired of stressing the bonhomie that the two countries shared, India appeared hesitant to extend military support despite signing the strategic partnership agreement way back in 2011. In 2015, then Afghanistan's envoy to Delhi, Dr. Shaida Abdali said, "Afghanistan is going through a very critical time; therefore, the Afghan government needs to conduct strategic consultations with its strategic partners" (Reyaz 2018). Even as the security situation deteriorated, New Delhi confined itself to infrastructure development and generally refrained from any aggressive military adventure that may raise suspicion in Pakistan. Under PM Modi, New Delhi also expressed its willingness to shrug off Pakistan's apprehensions and finally decided to deliver on promises of combat helicopters for combat (Reyaz 2018). In 2015, India had gifted four Mi-24 attack helicopters to Kabul from the Indian Air Force's inventory and three more indigenous Cheetal utility helicopters developed by Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL). In 2019, India handed over two more Mi-24 helicopters purchased from Belarus. "Under a tripartite agreement, India has agreed to purchase the attack helicopters from Belarus and supply them to Afghanistan" (The Hindu 2019). These were still not up to the expectations of Kabul, who had expected New Delhi to play a more proactive role in security build-up.

The return of the Taliban in August 2021 and the events unfolding in the preceding and successive weeks further exposed the shortcomings in India's policy in Afghanistan. It was tested most when desperate Afghans who wanted to escape from the country applied for short and long-term visas expecting the 'great friend' to stand by them in those hours of crisis. While it is still unclear what made India take such hasty decisions, the Indian diplomats were one of the first to leave Kabul no sooner than the Taliban forces had reached Kabul. There were also reports that India had misplaced or lost the passports of many desperate Afghans in the ensuing chaos. Although India evacuated a small number of high-profile Afghans and Hindu and Sikh minorities, most Afghans who had applied for visas were disappointed, although it was well known that for most of them, India would have merely been a transit before they had got their papers in order to reach their destinations in some Western countries. As an art activist, Omaid Sharifi noted in a tweet appreciating the efforts of countries like Albania (besides Qatar, UAE, and Poland, among others) in helping evacuate Afghans: "This one is for history! In the times of darkness, where almost all neighbors of #Afghanistan - the ones claiming to be our strategic friend like #India abandoned us and even stopped issuing visas, #Albania and its Prime Minister @ediramaal makes me hopeful for humanity" (Sharifi 2021).

India's knee-jerk reaction was a manifestation of the shortcomings in soft-power behaviors with little effort in working on alternative strategies even as it became imminent that the Taliban would come back to power sooner than later, leaving them with little maneuvers. This was exposed acutely during the negotiations in Doha when India largely remained on the margins, watching the show from the fences. As the US withdrawal was imminent, New Delhi seemed to have limited options in the "Afghan muddle" (Pant 2014). This was largely due to New Delhi's reluctance to have a formal communication channel with the Taliban. India had almost made the folly of putting all its eggs in two connected baskets - the administration in Kabul and the USA. It made sense for India as the Taliban was largely seen as Pakistan's proxy, but by not engaging more actively in the peace process, confining themselves to development projects. Nevertheless, by dragging their feet even when countries like China, Iran, Uzbekistan, Turkey, Russia, etc., who had supported anti-Taliban forces in the 1990s, quietly opened communications channels with the Taliban, India made a strategic mistake in the hindsight (Reyaz 2019).

The former Ambassador to Afghanistan, Vivek Katju, had tried to caution India just days before the fall of Kabul when he expressed his concern that India had "boxed itself into a corner in Afghanistan" and "become a bystander" (Thapar 2021). In the survey conducted in 2019, about 37 percent of Afghan respondents too had agreed that the deal with the Taliban would adversely impact bilateral relations (see Table 34).

India's soft power investments in Afghanistan undoubtedly helped in the nation-branding, making it attractive and creating a positive image and goodwill. However, it also presents a good example of how soft power alone has drawbacks. Soft power behavior "without effective use of hard power can often damage the otherwise positive image created - or fail to yield the desired positive outcome" (Kugiel 2016, 11), as the tweet of Sharifi, quoted above, echoed. No doubt India used its soft power well, but due to a lack of strategic planning and optimum use of what Nye termed as 'smart power', New Delhi wasted the goodwill it had generated in the last two decades.

COMPLIANCE WITH ETHICAL STANDARDS

Acknowledgments:

The authors would like to acknowledge the help of field investigators in Afghanistan in data collection, particularly Yasser Malikzada and Sakhirahman Azizi. They would also like to extend their gratitude to the Afghanistan Centre at Kabul University (ACKU), its former director Abdul Waheed Wafa, former Program Manager Rashmi Dangol, and other staff for hosting Dr. Reyaz and providing institutional support during the fieldwork in August-September 2019. Noorgul Shafaq, Ghousuddin Frotan, Munirullah Sabawoon, Israr Karimzai, Matiullah Wesa, Ejaz Malikzada, and others provided critical support during the fieldwork in Afghanistan. Research assistant Abul Barkat Jilani helped translate the responses received in Pashto and Dari to English. Dr. Kaifia Ancer Laskar of Aliah University and Dr. Omar Sadr of the American University of Afghanistan provided valuable input on the survey questions and analysis. Dr. Mehebab Sahana, Research Associate at the University of Manchester, helped in plotting the province-wise responses on the map of Afghanistan. We are thankful to The Texas GeoData portal at The University of Texas Libraries for the open-access geodatabase shapefile of Afghanistan.

Funding:

This research was sponsored by the Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR) under the Impactful Policy Research in Social Science (IMPRESS) scheme in 2019-2020.

Statement of human rights:

All procedures performed in studies involving human participants were following the ethical standards of the institutional and/or national research committee and with the Declaration of Helsinki and its later amendments or comparable ethical standards.

Statement on the welfare of animals:

This article does not contain any studies with animals performed by any authors.

Informed consent:

Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study.

REFERENCES

1. Beck, Ulrich. 2006. 'Living in the world risk society'. *Economy and Society*, Vol. 35(3): 329-345. Retrieved from https://edisciplinas.usp.br/pluginfile.php/4095470/mod_resource/content/0/Beck--WorldRisk.pdf (accessed on 20 December 2020).
2. Bhushan, Ranjit. 2020, 10 March. 'Medical Tourism - The Game Changer in India's Ties with Taliban'. *Money Control*. <https://www.moneycontrol.com/news/world/medical-tourism-the-game-changer-in-indias-ties-with-taliban-5018041.html> (accessed on 20 December 2020).
3. Brown, Robin. 2017. 'Alternatives to Soft Power: Influence in French and German External Cultural Action'. In N. Chitty, Li Ji, G.D. Rawnsley and C. Hayden (eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Soft Power* (pp. 37-47). Oxon: Routledge.
4. Carr, Edward H., and Michael Cox. 2016. *The Twenty Years' Crisis, 1919-1939: Reissued with a new preface from Michael Cox* (1st ed. 2016 ed.). London: Palgrave Macmillan.
5. Chitty, Naren. 2017a. 'Soft power, civic virtue and world politics (section overview)'. In N. Chitty, Li Ji, G.D. Rawnsley and C. Hayden (eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Soft Power* (pp. 9-36). Oxon: Routledge.
6. Chitty, Naren. 2017b. 'Introduction'. In N. Chitty, Li Ji, G.D. Rawnsley and C. Hayden (eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Soft Power* (pp. 1-6). Oxon: Routledge.
7. Dahl, Robert. 1957(2007). 'The concept of power'. *Behavioral Science*, Vol. 2(3): 201-215. <https://doi.org/10.1002/bs.3830020303>.
8. Dupree, Louis. 1962. 'India's Stake in Afghan-Pakistan Relations: Some of the Political Implications of the Afghan-Pakistan Border Dispute'. *South Asia series*, Vol. 6(1). Retrieved from http://catalog.acku.edu.af/cgi-bin/koha/opac-detail.pl?biblionumber=12658&query_desc=kw%2Cwrdl%3A%20Louis%20Dupree%20India%27s%20stake (accessed on 10 September 2019).
9. Ferguson, Niall. 2003. 'Power'. *Foreign Policy*, Vol. 134 (Jan-Feb): 18-24. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3183518>.
10. Gallarotti, Giulio M. 2011. 'Soft power: what it is, why it's important, and the conditions for its effective use'. *Journal of Political Power*, Vol. 4(1): 25-47. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2158379x.2011.557886>.
11. Kugiel, Patryk. 2016. *India's Soft Power: A New Foreign Strategy*. New Delhi: KW Publishers.
12. Lukes, Steven. 1974(2005). *Power: A Radical View* (2nd ed.). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
13. Morgenthau, Hans J. 1997. *Politics Among Nations. The Struggle for Power and Peace*. Revised by Kenneth W. Thompson - 6th international ed. Beijing: Peking University Press.
14. Nye, Joseph S. 1990. 'Soft Power'. *Foreign Policy*, Vol. 80, 153-171. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1148580>.
15. Nye, Joseph S. 2004 (2012). *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*. New Delhi: KW Publishers.

16. Nye, Joseph S. 2009. 'Get Smart: Combining Hard and Soft Power'. *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 88(4): 160-163. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20699631>.
17. Nye, Joseph S. 2011. 'Power and Foreign Policy'. *Journal of Political Power*, Vol. 4(1): 9–24. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2158379x.2011.555960>.
18. Paliwal, Avinash 2017. *My Enemy's Enemy: India in Afghanistan from the Soviet Invasion to the US Withdrawal*. New Delhi: Harper Collins Publishers.
19. Pant, Harsh V. 2014. *India's Afghan Muddle*. New Delhi: HarperCollins.
20. Rawnsley, Gary D. 2016. 'Reflections of a Soft Power Agnostic'. In X. Zhang, H. Wasserman, and W. Mano(eds.), *China's Media and Soft Power in Africa* (pp. 19-31). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
21. Reyaz, M. 2015, 25 December. 'Afghanistan Represents Victory of India's Soft Power'. *DailyO*, <https://www.dailyo.in/politics/india-afghanistan-pakistan-narendra-modi-ashraf-ghani-taliban-hamid-karzai-ab-vajpayee/story/1/8135.html> (accessed on 20 December 2020).
22. Reyaz, M. 2018, 20 September. 'Afghan President Ashraf Ghani's Visit: Kabul Wants More from India, But Will New Delhi Take Risks?'. *DailyO*, <https://www.dailyo.in/politics/ashraf-ghani-delhi-visit-afghanistan-india-taliban-chabahar-port-pakistan/story/1/26777.html> (accessed on 20 December 2020).
23. Reyaz, M. 2019, 10 April. 'Will Afghanistan's 'Friend' India Be Left as The Biggest Loser In The Ongoing Taliban Talk?'. *India Times*, <https://www.indiatimes.com/news/india/will-afghanistan-s-friend-india-be-left-as-the-biggest-loser-in-the-ongoing-taliban-talk-364968.html> (accessed on 20 December 2020).
24. Sharifi, Omaid. (@OmaidSharifi)2021, 30 August. Twitter post, <https://twitter.com/OmaidSharifi/status/1432209691577405440?s=20&t=NPb5k6d4HIsAqfal-OLodQ>(accessed on 27 March 2022).
25. Texas GeoData portal: Geodata, The University of Texas Libraries, Extracted on 31 December 2020, https://geodata.lib.utexas.edu/?f%5Bdc_format_s%5D%5B%5D=Shapefile&f%5Bdct_spatial_sm%5D%5B%5D=Afghanistan&per_page=50&sort=dc_title_sort+asc (31 Dec 2020)
26. Thapar, Karan. 2021, 11 August. 'India Has Boxed Itself into a Corner in Afghanistan; No Logic to Our Policy'. *The Wire*, <https://thewire.in/diplomacy/watch-karan-thapar-vivek-katju-afghanistan> (accessed on 27 March 2022).
27. The Hindu. 2019, 16 May. 'India Gives 2 Attack Helicopters to Afghanistan'. *The Hindu*, <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/india-gives-2-attack-helicopters-to-afghanistan/article27152979.ece> (accessed on 20 December 2020).

Copyright © 2022 The author/s
This work is licensed under a CC-BY 3.0 license
(*) Corresponding author
Peer review method: Double-blind
Received: 08.03.2022
Accepted: 04.04.2022
Published: 14.06.2022
Original scientific article
DOI: <https://www.doi.org/10.47305/JLIA2282177a>

How to cite:


Adejumo, Theophilus Oyime, John A. Adams, and Gabriel T. Abumbe. 2022. "TERRORISM AND ABRAHAMIC RELIGIOUS TRADITION: A FOCUS ON BOKO HARAM ISLAMIC FUNDAMENTALISM IN THE NORTH-EASTERN NIGERIA". *Journal of Liberty and International Affairs* 8 (2):177-201. <https://e-jlia.com/index.php/jlia/article/view/605>.




TERRORISM AND ABRAHAMIC RELIGIOUS TRADITION: A FOCUS ON BOKO HARAM ISLAMIC FUNDAMENTALISM IN THE NORTH-EASTERN NIGERIA

Theophilus Oyime Adejumo^{1*}, John A. Adams², Gabriel T. Abumbe³

¹Department of Political Science, University of Calabar, Nigeria  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6275-5201> ✉ theophilusoyime@gmail.com

²Department of Political Science, University of Calabar, Nigeria  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1500-7470> ✉ anyabeadams@unical.edu.ng

³Department of Political Science, University of Calabar, Nigeria  <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3222-4159> ✉ gabrielabumbe@yahoo.com

Abstract: *This study examines the normative hypothesis explaining the nexus between terrorism and Abrahamic religious tradition, particularly the Boko Haram Islamic fundamentalist sect in North-Eastern Nigeria. It is methodologically structured in quantitative and qualitative methods, where data and information are retrieved from primary and secondary sources. These were presented in a tabular form and analyzed descriptively within the context of the subject matter under investigation. The findings reveal that, beyond the classical arguments usually provided by the Abrahamic religious tradition school, the real reason behind global terrorism is for some overzealous religious bigots to establish a caliphate that will enable them to influence the international system. Based on these findings, the study concluded that the war against global terrorism would be a mirage unless national governments and international organizations fully address these fundamental issues.*

Keywords: *Terrorism; Abrahamic Religious Tradition; Globalization; Islamic Fundamentalism*

INTRODUCTION

The subject matter 'terrorism' is fundamental to the history of current global terrorism. This is why, in order to comprehend and reconceptualize the relationship between terrorism and the Abrahamic religious tradition, the paper will contest the normative assumption explaining the motivation of international terrorism. As a result, terrorism is a contentious topic. Its usage is often subjective and derogatory, intended to communicate an adversary's criticism. It is not possible to apply the phrase objectively. As a result, worldwide consensus on a definition has been difficult to achieve. Although terrorism was acknowledged as a significant worldwide security threat after the 11 September 2001 attacks on New York and Washington, it has remained on the international agenda since the problem has not been resolved. Global terrorism continues to be a source of concern, especially those linked to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, Iraqi, Afghan, and Pakistani circumstances, and the future of Kashmir and Indo-Pakistani ties.

Thus, terrorist groups' behaviors, activities, and goals are more similar. Though complicated, the intelligence that characterizes these organizations' highly structured networks is increasingly shaping their homogeneity. This, of course, is tied to the reality that, in a globalized society, new sets of complex and interconnected hazards drive nations to reinterpret their security requirements. This submission has developed into a powerful instrument in the 'hand' of rebel organizations lucky enough to possess armaments inside and along a sovereign state's territorial frontiers. Thus, what distinguishes terrorism as a novel and critical component of today's threat to international security is the increasingly complicated settings under which transnational non-state actors wield influence. For this purpose, terrorist tactics in the global environment currently seem to follow a regular model since it has been noticed that:

Along the boundaries of the crescent-shaped Islamic bloc of nations from the bulge of Africa to Central Asia; from Karbala in Iraq to the Caucasus in Western Asia, terrorist operational strategies and psychology motivating their engagement and even weapons employed are becoming increasingly similar (...) highly combustible methods are adopted against groups considered enemies. Hence, small arms and light weapons proliferation and suicide bombings are no longer strong features in modern terrorist activities (Huntington in Theophilus *et al.* 2021, 196-217).

This study mirrors the authors' strong cognizance to analyze the normative hypothesis explaining the nexus between terrorism and Abrahamic religious tradition by focusing on the ideological, operational, and motivating factors of international terrorism, particularly Boko Haram Islamic fundamentalists. To answer these questions, the study will examine the evolving meaning of terrorism. It will be contested that, while many classical scholars of terrorism view the ideology of Abrahamic religious tradition and poverty as an important element responsible for the emergence of global terror, the study hopes to analyze further that, beyond this argument, the real issues driving international terrorism is the motive to occupy territories/empires in the form of Islamic caliphates. Equally, the study will analyze and case study, particularly Boko Haram in West and Central Africa, and flip through some of the most active terrorist organizations in the contemporary era, such as the ISIS in the Arabian Peninsula, Hezbollah, and Hamas in Lebanon, the al-Qaeda in Afghanistan amongst others. The choice of these terrorist organizations is informed by the fact that all have 'conquered' territories and empires from the legitimate government of sovereign states. Before going into a detailed analysis, it must be emphasized that the majority of the territories conquered by these organizations are seamlessly interconnected.

On the other hand, these views are best understood in globalization and permeable borders context, which have accelerated the flow of people and things across international frontiers. This is why it is easy to conclude that global terrorism has proliferated into something more complex, particularly in forging coalitions between like-minded non-state actors. The activities of these groups have triggered and span across a clearly defined terrorist arc, from the Southern banks of Lake Chad, going through Tripoli to the northern area of the Tigris in the Arabian Peninsula.

These characteristics make the global environment vulnerable to terrorist activities occasioned by violent non-state actors. Based on this, one can understand the changing nature of the security scenario in the study area.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Religion, particularly when pursued with zeal and a readiness to sacrifice all else, defies modernity's expectations. Renowned social theorists and classical philosophers such as Karl Marx considered religion a fad that would ultimately die away. At the same time, Emile Durkheim saw it as a unifying force in old cultures that would lose importance when new forms and agents of cohesiveness emerged. However, current events in the world, whether viewed through the lens of the threat posed by a nuclear-armed Iran or the threat posed by Islamic fundamentalists, including the activities of terrorist groups in all major parts of the world, indicate that these classical scholars either underestimated the power of religion or were socially constrained in their perception of religion. Guillaume (1987) argued that the devout are motivated by the awareness that man's existence is to serve God, his creator, *ibada* (the act of worship of God). *Ibada*, in its entirety, is contingent upon the presence of an organized community of believers. Such a society necessitates the establishment of a government whose major objective is the realization of *ibada*. Therefore, the primary purpose of every struggling Muslim movement is to create a conducive atmosphere for the true worship of God. In this scenario, extremist adherents of the faith pervert, thereby justifying terrorist actions against those seen as unbelievers or infidels. The illusion of a secular or contemporary society in which religion is mostly ineffective might have persisted if not for Osama Bin Laden's orchestrated assault on the World Trade Center's twin towers in New York on 11 September 2001.

The massive killings caused by the attacks, the audacious character of the efforts, and the tremendous anxiety and misery they inflict make it imperative for the current world to pursue one path of progress (the nexus between terrorism and Abrahamic religious tradition). This is what the world quickly learned: Western ideas, education, and secularism had little effect on the power of religion to make people think about it in weird ways (Anugwan 2019). However, the wired nature of the international system has made the authors establish the connection between the hate religious teaching by uncompromising mullahs and their adherents directed at the philosophies promoting Western liberal orientations, which form a significant element informing and exacerbating modern terrorism. Attention will be made to bringing to the fore some influential theological philosophers of the early XX century and the role played by these individuals in shaping modern Islamic thoughts, including their disputably radical kind; one that modern-day followers subscribe to and are determined to attain that purity of socio-economic and political order that will avail them the opportunity to seek after spiritual harmony and ultimately access to paradise.

Although, terrorism has always been part of human society and human history for over two thousand years. Wilkinson thinks that ancient man did this by threatening to crush his victims with rocks. Medieval assassins used daggers to fight against Sunni Muslims in the Middle Ages. Violence and terrorism have always been part and parcel of a man's existence; even though religion gives enough reason for a peaceful existence in human society, most terrorists

ascribe their terrorist actions to religion. Scullard (1959) argues that the Roman political control over Judea in the I century AD and the weakness of the Jewish society to liberate itself from the brute force of the Pax Romana under the Caesars' force, a group of Jewish freedom fighters with no alternative than to resort to terrorist attacks of Roman symbol authority. To Guillaume (1987), the Roman Empire pursued a political agenda directed at the consummation of the cultural unity of its domination through political unification or what the state referred to as the "stoic cosmopolis" (p. 766). The desire of the Roman Empire to bring its twin doctrine of the Pax Romana and the stoic cosmopolis to fruition made their approach to governance, especially concerning its relationship with its subjects, to end in violent conflicts.

Many historical and present terrorist organizations, usually by their membership, have a significant religious component. Anti-colonial nationalist movements like the Jewish terrorist organizations active in pre-independence Israel and the Muslim-dominated FLN - Front de Liberation Nationale (National Liberation Front) in Algeria come to mind, as do more recent examples like the overwhelmingly Catholic Irish Republican Army (IRA), their protestant counterparts arrayed in various loyalist paramilitary groups like the Ulster Freedom Fighters and the Red Hand Commandos, and the Muslim-dominated FLN - Front de Liberation Nationale. However, in all of these organizations, the political side of their motivation is prominent, not the religious. Their ethno-nationalist and/or irredentist goals are unquestionably dominant. However, for others, religious motivation is paramount. Indeed, the theological mandate for terrorism is the most distinguishing feature of contemporary terrorist behavior.

In his contribution, Hoffman (1988) argues that the relationship between religion and terrorism is not novel. Over two thousand years ago, religious extremists committed the first acts of what we now refer to as 'terrorism'. Indeed, some of the terms we use in English to characterize terrorists and their deeds are taken from the names of long-defunct Jewish, Hindu, and Muslim terrorist organizations. Even within the Christian fold, for example, some terrorist organizations have emerged to lay their origin to the faith's creed by asserting their identity as the army of the Lord. However, the most prominent modern Christian movement identified with terrorism is the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), known to be a heterodox Christian cult known for its rebellion against Uganda State and operating along the dangerously defined borders of Northern Uganda, Southern Sudan, Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The group's objective is to institutionalize a government in Uganda based on the tenets of the Ten Commandments and the propagation of the Christian faith. Even in the classical Christian era, was on non-Christian nations intending to convert these nations were advocated by Pope Gregory I. However, this prescription for the expansion of the religion was never accepted as Church doctrine. Similarly, Joseph Kony, a self-acclaimed prophet who appears to be a personality cult, was proscribed as a terrorist group by the United States. Even though it has been accused of crimes against humanity, all these groups, including murder, kidnappings, mutilation, child soldier and child sex, and slavery, have been removed from designated active terrorist groups.

While terrorism and religion have a lengthy history dating back more than a century, ethno-nationalist/separatist and ideologically driven terrorism has eclipsed this specific form. Therefore, the XX century witnessed the activities of renowned Islamic clerics and scholars who have greatly impacted the nature and the interpretation of the content of Islamic theology and

practice for all time. For instance, Hassan Albanna, between 1905 and 1949, established the Muslim Brotherhood of Egypt as a revolutionary movement. Al-Banna clearly defined the organization's interest to include the liberation of the entire territory of the Ummah during a conference in his statement of a minor homeland that comprised the Nile Valley – Egypt and Sudan and the Greater homeland, which included the Gulf region to the Atlantic Coast as well as the extension to the Indian Ocean. In his analysis, al-Banna deciphers those factors which could constitute a setback to the progress of Islam in a universal system. This setback, in his analysis, is disunity amongst the adherent of the Islamic religion.

Corroborating the above analysis, Caleb (2017) espoused in his study on 'Terror Economy: Re-Examining the Narrative Motivating Global Terrorism', that there are other Islamic clerics such as Sayyid Qutb (1906-1966), and Abula ala Mawdudi (1903-1979), and his Jama'at-Islami which in his analysis noted that, of these three scholars, two: Qutb and Mawdudi through their revivalist theological interpretations seem to have had the greatest influence on modern-day fundamentalist Islamic thoughts. Studies have shown that they desire to top any legitimate political institution that did not accept and profess the Islamic faith in their separate analysis. In a separate analysis, Nasr (1994) note that the non-conformist traditions handed by Mawdudi and his likes have influenced the orientation, thoughts, and practices of the different sects of the Islamic faith.

Keay (2012), in 'The New Economy of Terror: Motivations and Driving Forces Behind Contemporary Islamist Insurgence', further analyzes the position made by Caleb and Nasr in his remark that the universal revolution endorsed by Mawdudi and others seems to be the pathway of latter-day fundamentalist groups in the contemporary period. This position, according to Keay, is what influenced Osama bin Laden to assert in the same spirit that he had declared war on the United States and their Western allies and had in a 1998 Fatwa warned the Muslim States of the implication of rendering support to whatever or even cooperating with Nations/States he term 'infidels'. Similarly, Abu Mahaz, in a CNN interview before a world press, declared that "the Islamic fundamentalist (terrorists) yes are terrorists because it is their faith" (Salkida 2009 in Ayuba 2017, 391). Boko Haram in Nigeria has also embraced this thinking, which has greatly influenced its orientation and behavior to date.

To this end, the author Raheem (2015) summarizes that:

Boko Haram prefers to be known by their Arabic name - Jama'atu Ahlissunnalidda'wal - Jihad - meaning 'people committed to propagating the prophet's teachings and Jihad. The town of Maiduguri, North-Eastern Nigeria, calls for eradicating all Western elements in Islamic societies. It sounded like an indigenous Salafist group, turning into a Salafist Jihadist group in 2009. Their line of thought believes anything Western is an aberration or completely unIslamic. The group viewed the Western influence on Islamic society as the basis of the religion's weakness. Ideologically, any member who fought and died for the cause of an Islamic/Sharia state by destroying modern state formation and government establishment/institutions would automatically gain 'Aljanna' (Paradise or Heaven). Consequently, the Nigerian state is the major vehicle transporting Western civilization; hence, the sects vendetta against the state institution and collaborators (pp. 16-33).

Consequently, as pointed out by Ayuba Caleb, Sayyid Qutb's theology and the world view he subscribed to, direct discourses and practices in global futures regarding modern Islamic scholarship cannot be undermined for its rebellious quality. He has the quality of stirring the masses (people) against any cultural practices they are perceived as alien to the teaching of Islam. Therefore, adherents of Islam believe that it is in Islamic teaching that the solutions to the problems of the human race can be addressed. This analysis led to the call for the abolition of the Westphalian system in favor of the Ummah - in other words, the universal society of Islamic faith with an emphasis on the categorized human community into the Dar-al-Harb - the home of war and Dar-al-Islam - the home of Islam (Weiss and Hassan 2013). Of course, this can explain why Samuel Huntington, in his book 'The Clash of Civilization and the Remaking of the New World Order', argued that Islam has bloody borders (Huntington 1997).

To a large extent, the growth in the number of Islamic terrorist movements is motivated and influenced by the quest to engage in Jihadist war through the instrumentalist of terror. In most cases, it is the pursuit of power, money, and the establishment of a caliphate. Studies have shown that, over the last couple of years, the United States government have discovered that al-Qaida, along with other Sunni Islamic terrorist movement, may have collected between \$70 and \$200 million US Dollar annually from criminal enterprises. In another instance, more than ten years ago, AQIM was worth over one hundred million US Dollars, which were proceeds of drug trafficking, smuggling, kidnapping-for-ransom, and other illicit enterprises (Caleb 2017; Crenshaw 2009; Ethridge and Handelman 2010; Lohmann 2011).

In pursuit of the US agenda, all terrorist organizations lean on several funding sources, including sponsorships, charities, individual donations, kidnapping for ransoms, and other illicit activities. However, in Arab communities, funds are usually transformed via HAWALA (an informal remittance system traditional to many Islamic communities through a regular banking system and courier). The funds are mainly for training recruits, weapons procurements, support to group members facing challenges and other activities, and waging the Jihadist war against Christians ('infidels'). However, Wezeman (2010) believes that many scholars and analysts have concluded that Eritrea sponsors al-Shabaab to counter regional power, aside from criminal enterprises. For nearly a decade, Ethiopia, Eritrea's long-time enemy, has sent USD 80,000 per month to some members of al-Shabaab through the Eritrean Embassy in Nairobi. In this situation, one could infer that, when nation-state conflicts are becoming less frequent, and war between major military powers is nearly unthinkable, terror has become the dominant source of concern in international society. This is because terrorist groups like al-Qaeda operate in the shadows and cannot be easily targeted like a country. People are afraid of them.

THE NIGERIAN STATE AND THE BIRTH OF ABRAHAMIC RELIGIOUS TRADITION

Nigeria has a long and tumultuous history of intercommunal and ethnoreligious strife. For example, since the return of democracy in 1999, there have been frequent outbreaks of violent conflict between different communities in Plateau State, Nigeria's 'middle belt'. There have also been riots in the cities of Kaduna and Kano and a simmering war in Bauchi's Tafawa Balewa district for several decades. From the outside, these confrontations may be mostly about religious differences and tensions between Muslim and Christian communities (Ikegbu and

Bassey 2019). However, a closer examination reveals that politics - specifically, control of government patronage - is the root of many of these confrontations. Election conflicts have sometimes resulted in schisms between Muslims and Christians. When violence breaks out in these situations, it generally starts with one group claiming control of the government machinery over another group or groups in a particularly varied and ethnically diverse section of Nigeria (United States Institute of Special Report 2012).

The data extraction and analysis revealed that Nigeria had been an Islamic country for generations. The governing parties believed that the neighboring territories attempted to degrade the Islamic religion, which led to early clashes. A theocratic federal state was established following the Jihad, solidifying a national faith. Ikime (1977) and Smaldone (1977) said that people in the bordering states were idol worshipers and unbelievers who looked like Muslims while secretly practicing pagan rites and preventing people from praising God, so they tried to look like they were Muslims.

Nigeria's central and southern areas turned to Christianity once European missionaries came, but the northern and western regions remained Islamic. The country was divided spiritually, but the people were also divided psychologically and emotionally due to the widely different cultures of Christianity and Islam. According to Burns and Burns (1972) and Falola and Heaton (2008), this was more than a religious separation; it was an ethnic division.

The divide deepened as more affluent Nigerians in the South took their children to the United Kingdom to receive an education. People's regional disparities have widened, particularly in schooling and higher education. People in the South were comparatively enlightened since they had educational access to information. Slavery was still practiced in northern Nigeria until 1936, officially outlawed. Boko Haram, an Islamic organization, was able to join this sort of split cultural milieu in quest of the abolition of Nigeria's government and the creation of Sharia rule. Boko Haram was created in 2002, but by 2010, the organization was well-established, armed, and highly brutal. The organization had evolved from a religious organization to one that tried to impose its will on Nigerians via bloodshed and terrorism.

Boko Haram terrorists continue to engage in violence and terror because they see violence as one of the required tasks and sacramentals to achieve their religion's teachings (Osumah 2013). This is even more evident in the sect's chosen locations. According to Taylor (2014), "the Boko Haram sect is dedicated to achieving supremacy over the Christian portion of the country at all costs" (Taylor 2014 in Osumah 2013, p. 32). These goals prompted the sect to destroy organizations like churches, government institutions, and educational institutions that they considered did not conform to or teach Allah.

UNMASKING THE IDENTITY OF THE PERPETRATORS OF THE GLOBAL TERRORISM INDEX

Terrorism as a political tool is not new. However, throughout the nineteenth century, anarchist revolutionaries in Russia, Italy, and other areas of Europe carried out bombings and killings to destroy organized government and capitalism. However, the 11 September 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon wreaked havoc on the fabric of American society on a scale never seen before (Parr 2018). Suddenly, the United States seemed vulnerable, despite its great military and economic might. Although 9/11 was the most heinous incident, it

was not the first time Islamic fundamentalist organizations launched a terrorist strike against the United States or the West. Terrorism in the world fell for the sixth year in a row in 2019. Between 2014 and 2019, the overall number of terrorist acts globally declined by 50%, while the total number of fatalities decreased by 54% (Barnett 2020). Regional patterns were markedly different. While the Taliban and the US were in discussions, Afghanistan saw 21% of all terrorist incidents worldwide in 2019. In 2019, Afghanistan was home to 41% of those killed in terrorist acts (including attackers).

Terrorism patterns in Iraq, which experienced more terrorist attacks than any other country each year from 2013 to 2017, continue to influence global statistical trends significantly. Between 2013 and 2019, the number of terrorist attacks in Iraq fell by 53%, while the number of individuals killed in terrorist attacks fell by 44%. Terrorist violence remained a problem in Iraq in 2019, and the rate of decrease may be decreasing. Between the formation of the caliphate in June 2014 and the recapture of Mosul in July 2017, the Islamic State carried out over 100 terrorist acts in Iraq, killing over 500 people on average each month. The group's violence in Iraq was reduced substantially and continued to fall throughout 2019, yet it was still deadly. In 2019, at least 350 Islamic State assaults in Iraq killed more than 500 people and 70 perpetrators, while the group also claimed hundreds of lives in Syria and other countries. While Islamic State violence in Iraq has decreased, the group's territorial reach has grown. In 2019, there were 31 attacks carried out by Islamic State 'core' operatives, linked groups, or unaffiliated people who declared allegiance to the group, compared to 35 in 2018. In 2019, however, three more nations - Mozambique, the Netherlands, and Sri Lanka - were targeted by Islamic State. This takes the number of nations that ISIS-linked terrorist strikes have targeted to 57.

In 2019, many noteworthy developments arose in African nations, notably in Nigeria, where total terrorist violence declined due to a decrease in assaults by Fulani extremists, although Boko Haram-related terrorist violence surged. Boko Haram's terrorist activities have also escalated in Cameroon, Chad, and Niger. Furthermore, Mali experienced a 16% decrease in assaults in 2019 but a 41% increase in deaths due to several mass casualty terrorist acts involving more than 30 people, compared to zero such attacks in previous years. The number of terrorist acts in Western Europe decreased by 6%, from 203 in 2018 to 191 in 2019, following a downward trend that began in 2016. In 2019, the number of people killed in terrorist attacks in Western Europe stayed the same, with 18 people killed and about 100 injured. This is the same number that happened between 2015 and 2016.

Figure 1 represents a map of Nigeria that reveals that the nation is bordered on the West by Benin, on the North by Niger, on the East by Cameroon and Chad, and on the South by the Atlantic Ocean.



Figure 1: The map of Nigeria with Northern and Southern Regions (Source: Onyemaechi 2020)

Terrorist incidents with large numbers of casualties remained uncommon in Western Europe in 2019. Nine terrorist acts out of 191 resulted in at least four wounded or killed individuals (Global Terrorist Group 2020). In the United States, there were 64 terrorist acts in 2019, with 51 people killed. A wide range of ideological influences still characterizes terrorism in the United States, some of which are complicated and ambiguous and rarely linked to formal, recognized groups. In the United States, 286 individuals were murdered in terrorist acts between 2015 and 2019 (excluding assailants). Almost all of the victims (95 percent) were killed in gun-related accidents. During this period, firearms were used in 27% of terrorist acts in the United States (Mandhana, Taylor, and Shah 2019).

In 2019, the lethality of 'racially and ethnically motivated terrorist acts' (REMT) increased dramatically, with many inspired by white supremacy, xenophobia, and anti-immigrant sentiments. In Australia, North America, and Western Europe, at least 86 individuals were killed in such assaults in 2019, up from 52 in 2018. The worst terrorist assaults of 2019 occurred in Sri Lanka on Easter Sunday. Eight perpetrators carried out suicide explosions at seven separate crowded venues, including hotels and churches, killing more than 250 people and injuring at least 500 more. At the eighth site, a pipe bomb was defused. According to Sri Lankan officials, Sri Lankan officials said the assaults were carried out by operatives of the National Thowheeth Jama'ath and Jammiyathul Millathu Ibrahim. However, Islamic State has released a video purporting to show the assailants swearing allegiance to the organization. Sources suggest that one or more assailants received training from the group.

Terrorist violence remained concentrated in a few areas and occurred in tandem with other forms of political violence. More than half of all assaults were carried out in five countries: Afghanistan (21%), Yemen (9%), Iraq (8%), India (7%), and Nigeria (6%). As in 2018, half of all deaths in 2019 occurred in Afghanistan (41%) and Nigeria (8%) (Onuoha 2011, 16).

Table 1: Terrorist Attacks and Total Deaths, Countries with more than 150 Attacks, 2019 (Source: Focus Group Discussion 2022 (in Global Terrorism Database) Statistical Annex: 2020:1-2)

Country	Total Attacks	% of Total	% Change from 2018	Total killed*	% of Total	% Change from 2018
Afghanistan	1804	21%	2%	8249	41%	16%
Yemen	771	9%	55%	1219	6%	8%
Iraq	642	8%	53%	798	4%	-44%
India	623	7%	30%	311	2%	25%
Nigeria	507	6%	22%	1718	8%	33%
Philippines	464	5%	23%	396	2%	10%
Pakistan	362	4%	25%	416	2%	40%
Somalia	360	4%	32%	860	4%	-25%
Syria	292	3%	25%	1102	5%	-29%
Democratic Republic of the Congo	250	3%	53%	642	3%	-35%
Colombia	228	3%	11%	134	1%	2%
Nepal	200	2%	102%	7	0%	-
Burkina Faso	159	2%	127%	797	4%	587%
Worldwide Total	8473	100%	14%	20309	100%	-13%

Three of the ten deadly attacks in the United States were labeled “doubt terrorism proper” in the GTD (2020), which means there is no clear consensus on whether the definitional criteria for terrorism were met.

Between 2018 and 2019, there was a significant reduction in terrorist violence in many regions. These are some of them:

- Libya, where the number of terrorist incidents has steadily decreased from 729 in 2014, when various Islamic State branches formed, to 70 in 2019. Similarly, the number of people killed in terrorist incidents went from 694 to 90 in the same period.
- Terrorist attacks in Pakistan, which peaked at over 2,200 in 2013 (2,800 people murdered), have declined dramatically. In Pakistan, there were 362 assaults in 2019, a 25% decrease from 2018, and 416 people (including 38 assailants) were murdered in 2019, a 40% decrease from 2018. (GTD 2020, p. 4).

Between 2018 and 2019, terrorist violence increased dramatically in many areas. These are some of them:

- In Yemen, where terrorist violence grew by 55 percent in terms of the number of attacks (771 in 2019) and 54 percent in victim deaths in a terrible conflict (903 in 2019). Despite the sharp increase in victim fatalities, overall mortality in Yemen increased by 9% between 2018 and 2019. This is due to a 41% decrease in perpetrator deaths in Yemen between 2018 and 2019.

- In 2019, Nepal was subjected to 200 assaults. However, almost all of them (98%) were non-lethal and not meant to inflict bodily harm. This 102 percent increase in assaults was primarily due to the Communist Party of Nepal (CPN).
- Maoists (CPN-Chand) targeted communications infrastructure, which resulted in the destruction of dozens of telecommunication towers, particularly in February, July, and August.
- In Burkina Faso, where terrorist violence has been continuously escalating since 2015, terrorist assaults increased by 127 percent in 2019, and the total number of deaths increased by 587 percent. The increase in lethality was mostly due to a rise in assaults involving 10 or more individuals, from 2 in 2018 to 25 in 2019. At least 9 assaults were carried out by Jama'a Nusrat ul-Islam wa al-Muslimin', also known as the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara.
- Cameroon, where anglophone separatists declared independence in 2017 and bloodshed occurred. Although the number of assaults in Cameroon was reduced by 38% in 2019, it had more than quadrupled in 2018. Between 2018 and 2019, the number of people murdered in terrorist acts grew by 28%, from 167 to 214 (Agence France-Presse 2019).

In 2019, 66 percent of all attacks worldwide were recorded with the perpetrator's identity. Individual offenders were recognized in 59 incidents, but they were not known to be linked with any single group or organization. The number of assaults carried out by unaffiliated people has decreased after peaking at 102 in 2017. In unaffiliated attacks, the number of people killed has also dropped, from more than 200 in 2016 to 98 in 2019 (GTD 2020, 5).

Table 2: Perpetrator Groups Responsible for more than 100 Terrorist Attacks, 2019 (Source: Global Terrorism Database 2020)

Perpetrator Group	Total Attacks	Change from 2018	Total Killed*	Change from 2018
Taliban	1375	9%	7531	-11%
Houthi extremists (Ansar Allah)	579	55%	983	11%
Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL)	461	-37%	1252	-44%
Boko Haram	348	43%	1954	47%
al-Shabaab	330	-33%	864	-25%
Maoists/Communist Party of India – Maoist (CPI-Maoist)	238	-11%	146	-23%
New People's Army (NPA)	192	-32%	155	-18%
Communist Party of Nepal – Maoist (CPN-Maoist-Chand)	134	148%	7	-
Fulani extremists	118	-61%	4	64%

Two hundred sixty-five (265) groups and organizations carried out terrorist acts in 2019 (Reinares 2005). Since peaking at 377 groups and organizations as perpetrators of terrorist incidents in 2016, this figure has been progressively falling in recent years. The perpetrator groups responsible for the most assaults in 2019 are listed in Table 2.

By a large margin, the Taliban in Afghanistan were responsible for more terrorist acts in 2019 than any other organization. Those assaults killed more people than the next ten worst perpetrator groups combined. The number of terrorist incidents carried out by the Taliban climbed by 9% between 2018 and 2019, but the overall number of deaths was reduced by 11% (Walker 2012). However, it is crucial to remember that Taliban strikes frequently result in the deaths of many perpetrators. The number of perpetrators killed in Taliban assaults declined by 31% in 2019, but the number of victims killed climbed by 9% (GTD 2020, 6).

In addition to the Taliban, Houthi extremists in Yemen (55 percent increase in attacks; 11 percent increase in total deaths; 54 percent increase in victim deaths) and Boko Haram (43 percent increase in attacks; 47 percent increase in total deaths; 37 percent increase in victim deaths) were among the perpetrator groups that increased terrorist violence in 2019 (there was a 148% increase in total attacks in 2019, with seven people killed, including one perpetrator, compared to zero in 2018) (Andrew 2012).

The Islamic State and allied organizations were among the terrorist organizations whose terrorist violence decreased in 2019. These include the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) (attacks down 37%, fatalities down 44%) and the Islamic State-Khorasan Province (ISIL) (attacks decreased 52 percent and deaths decreased 68 percent) (Alex 2016). On the other hand, this network of groups remained extremely lethal, and their attacks resulted in thousands of deaths at sites worldwide. In 2019, Islamic State operatives killed more than 1,000 people in Iraq and Syria. The organization also claimed responsibility for assaults in Lebanon, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, and Tunisia, in which several people were murdered.

Boko Haram expanded terrorist activity in Nigeria and surrounding countries such as Cameroon, Chad, and Niger in 2019. Boko Haram-related assaults claimed the lives of 241 people in Cameroon (up from 76 in 2018), 189 in Chad (up from 106 in 2018), and 315 in Niger (up from 50 in 2018) (GIABA 2013). Furthermore, Boko Haram (Barnawi faction, Islamic State West Africa Province) claimed responsibility for a 2019 attack in Burkina Faso in which 24 soldiers were killed. The lethality of racially or ethnically motivated terrorist acts increased dramatically in 2019. This rise was mostly due to particularly lethal assaults in the United States against Hispanic Americans and Muslims in New Zealand.

TERRORISM AND ABRAHAMIC RELIGIOUS TRADITION: AN IDEOLOGICAL NEXUS INVESTIGATING THE ACTIVITIES OF BOKO HARAM IN THE NORTH-EASTERN NIGERIA

The Abrahamic religious tradition may be defined as a series of doctrines or beliefs held by many people who have built a system based solely on feelings. Such a corpus of doctrine frequently includes references to fascist-like political and social plans and the group's tools to carry out its goal (Fisseha 2016). Furthermore, the Abrahamic religious tradition can be viewed through the lens of philosophy. Experts and analysts investigate the nature and origins of ideas derived from specific ideologies to understand better how a group's minds operate under this doctrine. On the other hand, ideological considerations aid in defining the formation of a terrorist group, notably Boko Haram, as impacted by global and political events in this study. The ideology of Boko Haram is frequently defined as consisting of two stances: antagonism

towards democracy and a rejection of Western-style education (Vanguard News 2009). However, the sect's theology and politics are more than just anti-Western sentiment. Its worldview combines two larger concepts. First, there is religious exclusivism, which opposes all other value systems, even competing Islamic interpretations. According to this exclusivism, Muslims must choose between Islam and a series of purportedly anti-Islamic activities such as democracy, constitutionalism, non-Muslim partnerships, and Western-style schooling.

Second, there is victimhood politics. Boko Haram says that its brutality responds to what it perceives to be a decades-long history of Muslim persecution in Nigeria. State crackdowns on Boko Haram are the newest manifestation of such persecution, according to Boko Haram. Boko Haram's leaders' philosophy may not pervade the movement, whose internal structure and degree of cohesion are unknown. Despite this, the sect's leaders have utilized religious discourse to excuse the sect's brutality, score-settling, and provocations. At the very least, such speech gives a narrative that attempts to justify the violent campaign: Boko Haram leaders tell a provocative story about what it means to be Muslim in Nigeria, designed to arouse fears that pious Muslims are losing ground to forces of immorality. There are four prevalent but ineffective therapies for Boko Haram, in addition to conspiracy theories that seek to explain the group. The first is the notion that Boko Haram is an unavoidable consequence of Northern Nigeria's poverty. More than 60% of Nigerians live on less than \$1 a day (BBC News 2012). The second view is that Boko Haram reacted to the North's perceived political marginalization, particularly in the North-East. Many Northerners were angered by President Goodluck Jonathan's electoral success in 2011 as a Southern Christian who rose to the office following the death of President Umaru Yar'Adua, a Northern Muslim. The third argument is that early Boko Haram was a branch of al-Qaida. This interpretation was convenient for Jonathan, who minimized Boko Haram's political statements by referring to the group as a 'terrorist group', a "West African al-Qaida" (Irish 2014).

Finally, there is the idea that Boko Haram is the reincarnation of Nigeria's Maitatsine sect or the sect's indirect descendant in terms of demographics and underlying reasons. Muhammad Marwa (1980), a Cameroonian preacher known as 'Mai Tatsine' (The Curser), condemned Western technology, espoused a 'Quran-on-ly' philosophy, and claimed to be a new prophet.

If such ideas constitute a danger to a state's security and stability, a better knowledge of them will assist in the formulation of effective plans and methods to eliminate them (Rapoport 2001).

Boko Haram, a Nigerian extremist organization, has been carrying out more brutal attacks in recent years. Since their first attack on Bauchi prison in northern Nigeria in September 2010, the group is known as Jama'am Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awa Wai-Jihad, which is an Islamist Sunni group for preaching Islam and conducting Jihad, has carried out numerous attacks that have claimed the lives of Nigerians, with the first two months of 2014 witnessing almost daily killings, bombings, thefts, and the destruction of schools, churches, homes, and businesses around villages in no time Nigerian security authorities executed Boko Haram founder Mohammed Yusuf while he was in police custody near the group's primary headquarters in Maiduguri, Borno State in northern Nigeria, a little over a year before this attack, in July 2009.

Security officials slaughtered about a thousand Yusuf's supporters, forcing them to flee. In hiding, Yusuf's deputy Abubakar Shekau emerged as leader a year after. Shekau's leadership

emerged with two new strands of Boko Haram doctrine that overlapped (Zenn 2014). The first ideology is motivated by a desire to carry out a 'vengeance mission'. They believe that retaliating against the Nigerian government and Islamic authorities in the North, who backed both former President Yar'Adua's smoking out of Boko Haram and the assassination of their previous leader, Mohammed Yusuf, in 2009, is the only option. Furthermore, President Jonathan was inaugurated as the new president in 2010 after Yar'Adua died of natural circumstances.

Boko Haram saw Jonathan's inauguration as a Christian president as a violation of their conviction that he was not a Muslim (Zenn 2013). Most of Yusuf's original followers, who had split up from Shekau into several smaller factions after his death, including the Yusufiya Islamic Movement, which kept Yusuf's name, adopted this ideological strand, even though their split was largely due to their disapproval of Boko Haram's tactics. The bombings against civilians and non-combatant Nigerians are part of a 'false Holy War'.

The second ideological stream is concerned with jihadist aspirations on a regional and worldwide scale. After Yusuf's death, two notable organizations split away from his original group and currently practice this belief. The first is Shekau's faction, which comprises Yusuf's initial supporters, while the second is Ansaru, a breakaway organization that split from Shekau in 2012. Ansaru's leadership received instruction from al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and has carried out operations since then.

Ansaru has expanded its actions over the West African area, even engaging international governments since it includes the kidnapping of foreigners in its terror itinerary. For example, in May 2001, Ansaru abducted and executed a British and an Italian engineer in Birnin Kebbi. They abducted and murdered a German engineer in Kano in March 2012. AQIM (al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb) claimed credit for the kidnapping in Kano, but it was Ansaru that carried it out. They abducted a French engineer in Katsina in December 2012, and his whereabouts are unknown. Ansaru abducted and murdered seven foreign engineers in Bauchi in February 2013. So far, Ansaru's ideology has been characterized by global communication, with the terror organization justifying its activities. For example, Ansaru stated, "kidnapping the French engineer was retaliation to France's desire to wage war on Islam in Mali and its restriction on Islamic women wearing headscarves in public places" (Zenn 2013, 22).

Similarly, when Ansaru assassinated three Nigerians who were part of a military convoy heading to Mali, the terror organization said it was retaliation for European nations' sins in Afghanistan and Mali. Boko Haram has recently grown increasingly international in its operations, even though it still has a local ideology. Boko Haram, for example, published a series of remarks in 2010 warning the US that 'Jihad had begun'. It claimed responsibility for the August 2011 suicide car attack on the UN building in Abuja.

The kidnapping of a seven-member French family in northern Cameroon in February 2013, when an Arabic-speaking member of Boko Haram who was holding the hostages threatened war against France in response to the European country's intervention in northern Mali, is where analysts are drawing a link between Ansaru and Boko Haram. The jihadist was identified by his use of Arabic rather than Hausa, his focus on France, and his choice of victim, the engineer and his family. The northern Cameroon kidnapping may have been the first sign of hybridization of the Boko Haram and Ansaru insurgencies, as these trends were more typical of Ansaru operations (Zenn 2013).

Analysts believe that a possible collaboration between Boko Haram, Ansaru, and other militant organizations in West Africa's Sahel areas, such as the Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa (MUJWA), will have a significant influence on the terrorist threat in the region (Idonor *et al.* 2011). This notion is substantiated by the fact that members of the AQIM terrorist organization educated the current commanders of MUJWA and Ansaru before 2011, when they regrouped and retreated from the Sahel towards southern Libya and Tunisia to work with the terrorist groups there. Al-Shabaab, a Somali terrorist group, has been linked to and inspired members of Boko Haram and Ansaru. Thus, the jihadi mandate in Sub-Saharan Africa has been handed on to Boko Haram, Ansaru, and MUJWA, all of which have global ambitions.

In Nigeria, Boko Haram is fighting for an Islamic state, while in West Africa, Ansaru and MUJWA are also fighting for an Islamic state. In addition, all three groups now consider themselves part of global Jihad. As a result, if these three terrorist groups - Boko Haram, Ansaru, and MUJWA - expand their terrorist collaboration, Nigeria, Africa's most populous and second most resource-rich country, will face a steady rise in the violent domestic insurgency in its northern regions, which will occur concurrently with several linked insurgencies in the West African region (Zenn 2013).

THEORETICAL DISCOURSE

The Nigerian state has been and is being threatened on many fronts by violence that are being perpetrated by Boko Haram Islamic Fundamentalist, whose ideology is rooted chiefly in the intent of destroying modern state formation and government establishment for the cause of institutionalizing an Islamic/Sharia state (Ogar and Ogar 2018). As a result, just as there are disagreements on the grounds for the group's radicalization, there is also disagreement over how the sect's emergence should be described. The frustration-aggression theory, the relative autonomy theory, and the failed state theory, among others, have all been presented as theoretical underpinnings. For the sake of this research, the article will, however, be based on a failed or failing state theoretical analysis.

The literature on state failure is divided into two strands: the first is the view that a failing state has a set of institutional structures that differ from a modern Weberian bureaucracy, and the second is represented by so-called functionalist theorists who argue that measuring failure is pointless. In the universe of Szuhai Ilona (2015), institutional systems determine nation-states' well-being. Although the notion of a failed state has been questioned on theoretical, normative, empirical, and practical grounds, it remains popular. Take, for example, the issue of definition. On the other hand, the word merely refers to a state that is no longer capable of performing the necessary activities to pass as a state (Zartman 1995). According to Anyanwu (2005), a 'failed state' is a state that has failed to meet the essential prerequisites and obligations of a sovereign government. For example, when a central government is so weak or ineffective that it has little practical control over the vast majority of its territory, public utilities are not provided, populations are dispersed, and economic decline is rapid, kidnapping, terrorism, arms proliferation, sexual abuse, killings, maiming, and the use of child soldiers are all common features of failing states. Colombia, East Timor, Indonesia, North Korea, Cote d'Ivoire, Haiti, Iraq, Sudan, Afghanistan, and, most likely, Nigeria are among them.

Failing states are inevitably the result of the breakdown of power institutions that provide political backing for law and order. This process is typically sparked and perpetuated by anarchic forms of internal violence. As a result, when state institutions like the police and judiciary break down and there is a lack of law and order, government functions are halted, as well as the destruction or looting of government assets and the deaths of experienced officials (Theophilus *et al.* 2020). This helps to explain why this research concluded that the situation in Nigeria, and the consequent rising worry about other such governments in the subregion, only heightened concerns about the role of 'failed states' in harboring or helping terrorists. Some see Boko Haram as a sign that Nigeria's government has failed or is collapsing. Others attribute it to poverty and bad government, while still others attribute it to the frustration-aggression theory. According to Raheem (2015), members of the group are typically dissatisfied with the state of affairs in the nation, particularly with the position of Northerners and Northern Muslims in the country's existing political and economic power structure.

According to Adibe (2012), Boko Haram is more of a symptom of Nigeria's nation-building dilemma. As suggested, the crisis caused a vast de-Nigerianization process. Many people and groups withdrew into primal identities, searching for meaning in the wake of the Nigerian state's betrayal. For this purpose, people who are abandoning the Nigerian cause on the spur of the moment see the state as an enemy and attack it with any tool they have at their disposal to destabilize the nation and its institutions. This inconsistency is what feeds, supports, and generates an ungoverned zone in which crimes and other horrors can thrive, eventually leading to state breakdown (Theophilus 2020).

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The North-East was peaceful until the monstrous Boko Haram ('Eastern education is a sin') attacks, first led by Muhammed Yusuf, escalated over a decade ago. Boko Haram has its operational base in Maiduguri, the capital of Borno State and the largest city in the North-Eastern Nigeria. At its inception in 2002, the main tenet among its followers was regime change in Nigeria, as they believed that democratic and secular rule contradicts Sharia (Obilor *et al.* 2018; Onyemachi 2020). The sustained assault by Boko Haram on the Nigerian state, its citizens, and foreigners followed its spread from Sambisa Forest Reserve in Borno State to the entire North-East and currently North-West geopolitical zones. However, the unprecedented increase in violent attacks is defying the narrative among some analysts that the North-West is relatively peaceful compared to the North-East. Boko Haram has mutated into cells linked to international terror groups like al-Qaeda and Islamic State-West Africa (ISIS-WA) (Onor 2021).

Boko Haram has notoriously diminished Nigeria's image at the international level. Both human and material resources have been lost in the fight against this terrorist organization. The abduction of schoolgirls - over 300 female students in Chibok (Borno State) on 14 April 2014; 110 female students from the Government Girls Science School, Dapchi, Yobe State, on the 19 February 2018; and 344 schoolboys from a school in Kankara near Katsina in December 2020 devastated Nigerians home and abroad. Similarly, women, children, men, military and paramilitary personnel have been kidnapped, maimed and killed. Schools have been shut down

in several parts of the North-East and North-West due to insecurity caused by Boko Haram (Channels Television Documentary 2016).

Danjuma (2014), in agreement with the above, ascertain that the escalation of the Boko Haram insurgency has internal destabilizing effects in Nigeria, to the extent that the group's activities have caused serious security challenges to the Nigerian state. In certain quarters in Nigeria, the series of attacks by members of Boko Haram have been misconstrued as targeting the Christians who are predominantly in the South by predominant Muslims in the North. This misunderstanding often occurs between Muslims and Christians on some religious issues. It is perhaps for this reason that Mazrui (2006) maintains that "Muslims and Christians in Nigeria fight each other from time to time" (p. 550).

Historically, Boko Haram is a product of globalization. Like several trending issues, the group has had a firm grip and 'subdued' the West Coast and Central African State for almost a decade. The sub-regional blocs have fallen under the group as its geostrategic sphere of influence. This explains why the group is motivated mainly by the desire to acquire empires in its image. It has been severally caught declaring that the goal sustaining its thrust is the construction of an organic Islamic State in the Nigeria sub-region in general. It is equally important to state that Islam does not subscribe to the activities and the accompanying strategies of these extremely violent elements operating under the umbrella of ISIS, AQIM, Boko Haram, al-Shabaab, al-Qaeda, and several others. The group slaughtered children, women, and other vulnerable people in societies that are antithetical and extremely adversative to the tenets of the Islamic religion that has a patron in the Abrahamic belief system (Caleb 2015).

The group has specifically borrowed its origin and ideas from various climes within a highly complex and dynamic global environment, including the Middle East and, ironically, the Mosques of London. Fiery and demagogue preachers who migrated into Europe, especially the United Kingdom, around the late decade of the XX century - 1980-1990s played a major role in shaping the terrorist mentality in the UK. Many recruited young men imbibed the ideology in the UK, whose complete circle ends with full indoctrination in Yemen and elsewhere. Other studies revealed that Boko Haram received these training and indoctrination sessions from the al-Shabaab group in Somalia and al-Qaeda in the Maghreb (AQIM) around the Central Saharan zone. This situation, however, explains why Ribadu (2015) emphasized that "there is no pointer to the global nature of what presently is the world's highest security risk than this" (p. 793).

This, of course, brought to the fore the extremely anti-modernity ideology in Northern Nigeria that is reminiscent of other volatile terrains like Somalia, Afghanistan, Iraq, and elsewhere. These anti-Western thoughts emanated from two Nigerians. Abu Umar a native of the ancient city of Kano and Muhammed Ali of Borno at the tip of the Chad Basin. These individuals had contact with Abu Albasir al Dardusi, a Syrian preacher in Yemen, whose teaching indoctrinated these Nigerians by rejecting anti-Western symbols, education, and modern values as the main areas of his attacks, which of course, is anchored on a single Hadith.

Unfortunately, when those Islamic clerics returned to Nigeria, they embarked on the task of proselytizing for new converts to their newly acquired knowledge and teachings. They especially targeted young Sunni preachers that had been versed in fundamentalist orientations. Two established and educated local Islamic scholars, Muhammed Yusuf and Bello Oma, immediately connected with Umar and Abi, who converted them to these new revolutionary

teaching. Yusuf was recognized for his intellect, worldview, education, and personality trait by the movement's hierarchy, who made him one of the frontline leaders. From around 2001, differences in understanding doctrinal position/teachings and egoistic/personality clashes led to the group's splintering into smaller units (Ribadu 2015). However, these factions reunited when Ali was killed and Umar was arrested and imprisoned by the state's authority. At this juncture, Muhammed Yusuf took full charge of the group. Because many of the leaders were prominent preachers in their own right, recruiting was first done via compelling preaching and sermons and one-on-one brainwashing sessions, according to the recruitment method. Some leaders would embark on itinerant teaching tours to cities and villages, mostly to attract disgruntled young men. The club initially relied on donations from members, some of whom were dealers or worked in low-wage occupations. Several of them sold their homes in order to support the campaign. However, as the violent campaign began, they turned to kidnappings for ransom, bank robberies, and armed robbery to sustain their expanding numbers of recruits. To further buttress the fact that money and power motivate the group's ideological orientation. Keay (2012) argued that the massive theft of crude oil in the South-South, amounting to over one million barrels per day due to the diversionary influence of the Boko Haram terrorist activities in the Sahel region of Nigeria's North-East, is indicative of the reality that money and power are the important motivation of terrorism in Nigeria and the Sahel region as a whole.

However, to make meaning out of the recent terrorist activities, the author Keay (2012) has provided a perspective bordering on the post-modernist phenomenon, especially US globalization variants. He notes, "globalization paves the way for non-state armed groups to advance the course of liberal philosophies and socio-economic progress; the same process has also inversely facilitated the networking of violent non-state actors" (Keay 2012, 797). He has trenchantly argued:

An economic analysis downplays the role of religion, relegating it to a mere means of recruitment while focusing on the growing tension between a dominant Western capitalist system and a resentful and growing Muslim population, hemmed in by corruption and deceit (...) what we are witnessing today, therefore, goes well beyond the motivations of single Islamist armed group. It is a clash between two economic systems - one dominant, the West, and the other insurgent - Islam (Keay 2012, 798).

In a bid to address these security dilemmas triggered by the Boko Haram insurgents, the Nigerian state led by the former President Goodluck Jonathan adopted the National counterterrorism approach designed to assist the government in effectively addressing the threats of terrorism and reduce its risks in Nigeria to provide a safe environment for Nigerians to go about their daily lives freely and confidently (Okereke 2017). As a subset of the National security strategy, Nigeria's National Counter-Terrorism Strategy (NCTEST) was drafted to provide protection to the public, assist organizations in dealing with acts of terrorism, and pursue terrorist and their sponsors. It also held the promise of tackling the root causes of terrorism in Nigeria. Following this, on 29 May 2015, President Buhari relocated the Nigerian Army's military theater command and division from Abuja to Maiduguri, improved the military budget and approved the purchase of arms for security forces and agencies, and investigated the use of

military funds under the administration of Goodluck Jonathan, leading to the arrest of former National Security Adviser Sambo Dasuki for alleged embezzlement of funds. Thus, under Buhari's leadership, defense spending has stayed high over the previous six years, despite the military's performance falling short of many Nigerians' expectations. President Buhari said in March 2018 that his administration was willing to accept the "unconditional laying down of weapons by members of the Boko Haram organization who demonstrate significant commitment in that direction" (p. 466) after asserting that Boko Haram had been 'technically crushed'. Many Nigerians criticized the move because releasing 'repentant' Boko Haram militants into the civilian population could be counterproductive.

The irony of the war in the North-East and North-West is a mismatch of funding and ineffectiveness on the part of the military. Analysts have identified some factors responsible for the vulnerability of the North-East and North-West to incessant violent attacks owing to porous borders and difficult terrain, arms, and weapons trafficking, poor governance, poverty and climate change, overburdened security apparatus, controversial peace agreements between some state governments and criminal groups, etc. These same factors, it must be stated, are more or less universal in their applicability across the country. These same factors, it must be stated, are more or less universal in their applicability across the country. However, it is important to note that the intensification of counterterrorism measures stipulated in NACTEST degraded Boko Haram insurgents across the country within the first two years. The sects' ability to carry out attacks on military establishments, assault and execute suicide attacks has significantly reduced.

Equally, the periodic online presence of Boko Haram's most vocal leader, Abubakar Shekau, has since March 2015 diminished, giving credence to speculations of his death in Combat (Goffey 2016). Speaking with the United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon during the World Future Energy Summit in Abu-Dhabi, President Muhammadu Buhari declared that, following collaboration with the Multi-National Joint Task Force (MNJTF) of the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC), Nigerian Armed Forces had driven Boko Haram insurgents from Nigerian territory such that they no longer hold any territory. Alhaji Lai Mohammed, Nigerian Minister of Information and Culture, and her Defence Counterpart, Gen. Mansur Mohammed Dan Ali (Rtd), have corroborated this official argument. The first two years of NACTEST implementation gradually restored public confidence in the government's counterterrorism capabilities.

Despite all of these achievements, there is increasing concern that the threats of terrorism in Nigeria remain alarming. For instance, suicide attacks and ambushes by the Boko Haram against carefully-selected targets, including a United Nations aid convoy to Bama (Vanguard Newspaper 2016). Furthermore, the constant menace of armed herdsmen across the country, especially in the lower Benue Valley, prison/jailbreaks, the activities of the Niger Delta Avengers, and that of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), among others, are indicators of the changing nature of terrorist acts in the country.

CONCLUSION

Although terrorism and Abrahamic religious tradition are linked in Nigeria, the theoretical foundations conclude that Abrahamic religious tradition is primarily the excuse that Nigerian society latches onto and exploits. In Nigeria, terrorism has always been motivated by religious beliefs. Extremism and radicalization have fueled the rise of terrorist assaults, particularly in the Muslim North. Boko Haram has long been antagonistic to Christians, whom they regard as 'infidels', as they strive to control the North while propagating their ideas. As a result, their attacks against Christians have been motivated by the reality that their population and ideology are rapidly dwindling. As a result of this knowledge, they focused their hatred on defenseless Christians, using terror as a tool to instill dread and worry among the populace. As difficult as it may be for the government to take religion out of the equation and focus on injustice and disenfranchisement, they can at least explain why terrorism is not a new political strategy. Political events are hard to predict, especially in international relations, where so many uncontrolled forces are at play.

However, few analysts or policy analysts anticipated the end of the Cold War only five or six years before it happened. Only a year or two before the 11 September terrorist attacks, few could have predicted their magnitude or how they would change the nature of domestic and international politics. Today, as the world faces an uncertain future triggered by the activities of violent non-state actors (terrorists), it can be realized that economic inequality, ethnic-nationalism, religious and ideological provocations or sentiments, technological development, global strategic imbalances, and repressive national governments are among the causes of global terrorism. Indeed, this paper further underscored the above position because, without cooperation and a united front through a global offensive against terror at the international level, it will be practically impossible to curtail the menace of terrorism. In other words, the transnational nature of international terrorism has made tracking its trends and dynamics a very difficult challenge. However, this position explains why the United States coalition against terror, especially in ISIS-controlled territory in Syria and Iraq, is a strategy that will help weaken the groups' control of the region.

Equally, the Multi-National Joint Task Force Initiative of the countries of the Lake Chad Basin is another important cooperative effort proving useful in the war against the security challenges posed by the Boko Haram insurgents. It is also important to state that the fluidity of this organization and the secrecy that characterizes its *modus operandi* can only be checked through the constitution of a Unified Front. Boko Haram knows no boundaries, and its bloody soldiers have no respect for conventions or international law. Hence, they traverse the borders of Niger, Chad, and Cameroon without any apprehension. Therefore, only the mobilization of troops throughout the affected region could successfully deter the Boko Haram elements from achieving their cardinal objectives of requiring empires and establishing a caliphate in their image.

COMPLIANCE WITH ETHICAL STANDARDS

Acknowledgments:

Not applicable.

Funding:

Not applicable.

Statement of human rights:

This article does not contain any studies with human participants performed by any authors.

Statement on the welfare of animals:

This article does not contain any studies with animals performed by any authors.

Informed consent:

Not applicable.

1. Adibe, J. (2012). "Nigeria without Nigerians? Boko-Haram and the crisis in Nigeria's Nation-building". *International Academic Journal of Education Research*, 1(1):16-33.
<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/3.0/>
2. Alex, T.(2016). "The disease is unbelief": Boko-Haram's Religious and Political worldview. The center for Middle East Policy, Washington, D.C.20036-2103.
3. Anyanwu, U. (2005). "Fail states in Africa: The Nigerian case since 1960". *American Journal of International Politics and Development Studies (AJIPDS)*, 1(1), 55-70.
4. Barnett, A. (2020). "Aviation Safety: A whole new world"?. *Transportation Science*, 54(1), 84-96. <http://doi.org/10.1287/trsc.2019.931>.
5. Bassey, S.A., (2020). *Technology, Environmental Sustainability and the Ethics of Anthropoholism*. *Przestrzeń Społeczna*, 20(2), pp. 85–110.
6. BBC News. "Nigerians living in poverty rise to nearly 61%". 13 February 2012.
<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-17015873>.
7. "Boko Haram Resurrects, Declares Total Jihad". *Vanguard*, 14 August 2009.
<http://www.vanguardngr.com/2009/08/boko-haram-resurrects-declares-total-jihad/>.
8. Burns, A., Burns, A. C. (1972). *History of Nigeria*. Allen and Unwin Press.
9. Caleb, A. (2017). "Terror economy: Re-examining the narrative motivating global terrorism". In P. A. Gwaza & E. N. Ubi (eds.) *Nigeria in global governance, peace, and security*. Lagos, Okoye Honeybees Ltd.
10. Channels Television Documentary. "National Conference Committed to Finding Solution to Insecurity Delegate, 20th April 2014. www.channelstv.com>.
11. Danjuma, A. I. (2014). "National security and the challenges of terrorism in Nigeria". In Nwoke, N. G. and Ogaba, O. (eds.), *Contemporary Challenges in Nigeria, Africa, and the World. Lagos: The Nigerian Institute of International Affairs*. (NIIA), p. 217-238.
12. Emmanuel, C., Majirayo, B. B., Fidelis, O. O., Ogbulafor, I. O. (2018). "Conflict Management in Inter-Governmental Relations in Nigeria: Issues and Prospects". *GNOSI: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Human Theory and Praxis*, 1(1), 16-21.. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.3383221>.
13. Erin, M. K., Allison, E. B. & Anthony, F. L. (2019). Why do some terrorist attacks receive more media attention than others?. *Justice Quarterly*, 36(6), 985-1022.<http://doi.org/10.1080/07418825.2018.1524507>.
14. Ethridge, M. and Hundelman, H. (2010). "Politics in a changing world". *A comparative introduction to political science*". United State: Wadsworth, Cengage Learning. P. 594-598
www.ichapters.com.
15. Falola, T., Heaton, M. M. (2008). *"A history of Nigeria"*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
16. Federal Republic of Nigeria (2019). National Security Strategy Report, Abuja, Nigeria.
www.thecable.ng> [amp](http://www.thecable.ng/amp).
17. GIABA Report .2013. "Inter-Governmental Action Group Against Money Laundering In West Africa". Secretariat@giaba.org
18. Goffey, C. (2016). "Boko Haram's Abubakar Shekau rejects new leader, suggesting split with ISIS". *Newsweek*, 4 August 2016.www.newsweek.com>.....>[chibokgirls](http://www.chibokgirls.com)

19. Hoffman, L. (2015). "Nigeria: Challenges and opportunities at a time of cheap oil and a costly insurgency". In Carbone, G. (eds.) *Africa: Still Rising?* Milano, USA: Italian Institute for International Political Studies (ISPI), p. 87-110. www.ispionline.it.
20. Huntington, S. (1997). "The clash of civilizations and the remarking of the New World Order". New York, NY: Simon and Schuster, p. 1-321
21. Ikegbu, E. A., & Bassey, S. A. (2019). Ahamefula: Discovering Leadership Gaps of the African Being. *Cogito* 11(4), pp. 75-89. <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>
22. Ikime, O. (1978). "The fall of Nigeria: The British conquest". *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 11(1), 170-173. <https://doi.org/10.2307/217083>.
23. John Irish, "Nigerian President: Boko Haram is West Africa's Al-Qaeda". *Reuters*, 17 May 2014, <http://www.businessinsider.com/r-boko-haram-is-west-africas-al-qaeda-says-nigerian-president-2014-17>
24. Keay, P. (2012). "The new economy of terror: Motivations and driving forces behind contemporary Islamist insurgencies". In Darweish, M. and Rank, C. (eds.). *Peacebuilding and reconciliation: Contemporary themes and challenges*. London: Pluto Press, 139-144.
25. Kriviņš, A., Teivāns-Treinovskis, J. S., & Tūmalavičius, V. (2021). "Issues of state and national security: Religiously inspired terrorism in the Baltic States: Internal and external factors". *Insights into Regional Development*, 3(1) 63-79. [http://doi.org/10.9770/IRD.2021.3.1\(4\)](http://doi.org/10.9770/IRD.2021.3.1(4))
26. Lankford, A. (2019). "Confirmation that the United States has six times its global share of public mass shooters, courtesy of Lott and Moody's data". *Econ Journal Watch*, 16(1), 69-64. <http://econjwatch.org/>
27. Lohmann, A. (2011). "Who owns the Sahara? Old conflicts, new menaces: Mali and the Central Sahara between the Tuareg, Al-Qaeda and organized crime", Abuja; Nigeria: Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, p. 1-24.
28. Maizland, L. (2020). "Global terrorism database, National Consortium for the study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism, US-Taliban peace deal: What to know". *Council on foreign relations*. The University of Maryland, p. 1-12. <http://www.start.umd.edu/>
29. Mandhana, N.; Taylor, R. and Shah, S. (2019). Sri Lanka Bomber trained in Syria with Islamic State. *Wall Street Journal*. Retrieved from <https://www.wsj.com/articles/sri-lanka-attacks-show-isis-reach-even-after-defeat-11556561912>
30. Mazrui, A. A. (2006). *"Islam: Between globalization and counterterrorism"*. Oxford, United Kingdom: James Currey Ltd., pp. 331. ISBN 13-978-159221326x.
31. Mehari, F. (2016). "The nexus between religious and terrorism: An investigation into Boko-Haram killing activities in Nigeria". M.A. degree thesis submitted to Department of Religion in Peace and Conflict, Uppsala, Universitet, p. 1-45.
32. Merriam, M., Daniel, L. & James, C. (2012). "What is Boko Haram?". United States Institute of Peace: Special Report. Washington, DC., 1-13. www.usip.org.
33. Nasr, S. R. (1994). "Mawdudi and the Jama'at-Islami: The origin, theory, and practice of Islamic revivalism" In Paul, A. G. and Efem, N. U. (eds.) *Nigerian in Global Governance, Peace and Security*. Lagos, Nigeria: Okoye Honeybees Ltd. P. 385-405.

34. Niharika, M., Rob, T. and Saeed, S. (2019). "Sri Lanka bomber trained in Syria with Islamic State". *Wall Street Journal*. Available at: <https://www.wsj.com/articles/sri-lanka-attacks-show-icic-reach-even-after-defeat-11556561912>.
35. Ogar, T. E., & Ogar, J. N. (2018). "Globalization in Africa and Beyond: The Quest for Global Ethics". *GNOSI: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Human Theory and Praxis*, 1(2), 38-47. Retrieved from <https://gnosijournal.com/index>.
36. Okereke, C. N. (2017). "Implementing Nigeria's National Counter-Terrorism Strategy in a period of Transition": In Gwaza, P.A. and Ubi, E. N. Nigeria in Global Governance, Peace and security (eds). Lagos: Okoye Honeybees Ltd., 457-468.
37. Onor, S. O. (2021). "Insecurity and national unity in Nigeria: Righting the wrongs of public policy", 8th distinguished lecture of the Institute of Public Policy and Administration (IPPA), University of Calabar, Calabar, Nigeria: Stamford Digital Press, p. 1-312.
38. Onyemachi, F. C. (2020). "Complementary Leadership: A Neglected Key to National Security Issues in Nigeria" *GNOSI: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Human Theory and Praxis*, 3(1), 76-84. <http://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.3902665>.
39. Osumah, O. (2013). "Boko Haram insurgency in Northern Nigeria and the vicious cycle of internal insecurity". *Small Wars Insurgencies*, 24(3), 536-560. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09592318.2013.802605>.
40. Parr, T. (2018). "Presence and Absence: The World Trade Center in Film Before and After 11 September 2001", Ph.D. dissertation, Concordia University. P. 1-125.
41. Raheem, S. O. (2015). "Boko-Haram: The menace of small arms and light weapons proliferation in Nigeria". *International Journal for Education Research* (USA), 1(1), pp. 16-33. <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/3.01>.
42. Rapoport, D. C. (2001). 'The fourth wave: September 11 in the history of terrorism' University of California Press: 100(650), 419-424.
43. Reinares, F. (2005). "Conceptualizing International Terrorism". *Real Instituto Elcano Royal Institute*, 82(2), 309-321. www.realinstitutoelcano.org/analyses.
44. Rotberg, R. I. (2003). "Failed states, collapsed states, weak states: Causes and indicators". In Rotberg, R. I. *State failure and state weakness in a time of terror* (eds.) Washington, 2003, pp. 1-25. brookings.edu.
45. Scullard, H. H. (1959). "From the Gracchi to Nero: A history of Rome from 133 BC to AD 68". London: Rutledge. Pp. 765-768.
46. Smaldone, J. P. (1977). "Warfare in the Sokoto Caliphate: Historical and sociological perspectives". Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 1-244. ISBN 13.978-0521101424.
47. Szuhai, I. (2013). "Rethinking the concept of a failed state". Department of Immigration and Nationality, Faculty of Law Enforcement, National University of Public Service, Central European Papers, 111(2), 99-110. www.researchgate.net 15 January 2022.
48. Taylor, L.L. (2014). "Boko-Haram terrorism: Reaching across international boundaries to aid Nigeria in the humanitarian crisis". *ILSA Journal of International and Comparative Law*, 21(1), 1. <https://nsuworks.nova.edu/ilajournal/v0121/iss1/1>.
49. Theophilus, O. A., Ndum, V. E. & Abang, P. E. (2020). "Human security challenges and the development state: The Nigerian Experience". *International Journal of Innovative Research in Technology*, Volume 7(1), 542-553. ISSN 2349-6002.

50. Theophilus, O. A., Owa, E. O. & Ojie, A. P. (2021). "Migrants and the proliferation of small arms and light weapons in Third World Countries: A study of North-Eastern Nigeria since 1999". *Journal of Liberty and International Affairs*, 7(3), 196-217.
<https://doi.org/10.47305/JLIA2137196a>.
51. Vanguard News. "Boko Haram Resurrects, Declares Total Jihad". 14 August 2009
<https://www.vanguardngr.com/2009/08/boko-haram-resurrects-declares-total-jihad/>.
52. Weiss, M. and Hassan, H. (2015). "*ISIS: Inside the army of terror*". 91(5), 1191-1192.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/1468>.
53. Wezeman, P. D. (2010). "Arms flows and conflict in Somalia: SIPRI background paper", Stockholm International Peace Research Institute. P. 1-11. www.sipri.org/sipri-background-paper.
54. Zartman, W. I. (1995). "Introduction: Posing the problem of state collapse". In Rienner, L. *Collapsed states: The disintegration and restoration of legitimate authority*, (eds). Boulder, US/London, UK. 1-11.
55. Zenn, J. (2013). "Cooperation or competition: Boko Haram and Ansaru after the Mali intervention". *Combating Terrorism Center at the Westpoint*, 6(3), 1-75.
<http://www.ctc.usma.edu>.
56. Zenn, J. (2014). "Leadership analysis of Boko Haram and Ansaru in Nigeria". *Combating Terrorism Center at the Westpoint*, 7(1), 1-9. <http://www.ctc.usma.edu>.

Copyright © 2022 The author/s
This work is licensed under a CC-BY 3.0 license
(* Corresponding author
Peer review method: Double-blind
Received: 14.04.2022
Accepted: 07.05.2022
Published: 14.06.2022
Review article
DOI: <https://www.doi.org/10.47305/JLIA2282202e>

How to cite:


Eneyo, Violet B., Jihad Talib, Frank Mbeh Attah, and Eric Etim Offiong. 2022. "IRAN'S NUCLEAR POLICY: NATURE, AMBITION, AND STRATEGY".
Journal of Liberty and International Affairs 8 (2):202-22. <https://e-jlia.com/index.php/jlia/article/view/607>.





IRAN'S NUCLEAR POLICY: NATURE, AMBITION, AND STRATEGY

Violet B. Eneyo¹, Jihad Talib^{2*}, Frank Mbeh Attah³, Eric Etim Offiong⁴

¹University of Calabar, Nigeria  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4867-0471> ✉ violeteneyo@unical.edu.ng

²Universitas Muhammadiyah Bulukumba, Indonesia  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3949-8569> ✉ talibjihad@gmail.com

³University of Calabar, Nigeria  <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3110-3507> ✉ drfrankattah1@gmail.com

⁴University of Calabar, Nigeria  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1860-1811> ✉ ericoff07@gmail.com

Abstract: Nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons represent the biggest danger to humanity. During the Cold War, the US and USSR provided 'umbrella protection' to convince allies not to acquire nuclear weapons. Most 'newly' independent nations never had such security during the Cold War since they were not part of a power bloc. During the Iran-Iraq conflict (1980-1988), the Islamic Republic of Iran was attacked with chemical weapons. Since Mujahedin-e-Khalq (MEK), an Iranian exile organization, exposed Iran's hidden nuclear program in 2002, the topic has gained worldwide attention. Iran's nuclear agenda has produced a worldwide catastrophe despite its NPT membership. Iran says its nuclear program is peaceful and respects Islamic values. Most US politicians and academics consider Iran a rough nation with political and strategic concerns, including regional hegemony, human rights, terrorism, WMD proliferation, and military operations beyond the border. This study examines Iran's nuclear policies to demonstrate its essence, goal, and strategy.

Keywords: Iran; Nuclear Weapon; Nuclear Policy; Chemical and Biological Weapon

INTRODUCTION

After World War II, the atomic bomb took center stage in the global race for armament. Britain and the Soviet Union joined the race immediately after the war, and other countries followed suit later. However, now, any state that tries to acquire an atomic weapon has to comply with the rules and norms of the IAEA and other nuclear-armed states. According to the Arms Control Organisation and SIPRI, the United States possesses almost 1,597 strategic nuclear warheads deployed, compared to Russia's 1,582, followed by France, the United Kingdom, and so on (Woolgar-James 2016). According to Thakur (2015), the world has over 17,000 nuclear warheads, with the US and Russia together holding over 16,000. The highly enriched uranium is estimated to be around 1380 tons, with nearly 98% held by nuclear-weapon states, particularly the United States and Russia.

According to Amiard (2021), as of 2013, almost 495 tons of plutonium are also owned by nuclear states. Some countries were once nuclear weapons states or nuclear-capable states but have voluntarily outlawed and dismantled them. South Africa was once secretly developing a nuclear weaponization program. However, it later decided to dismantle it by joining the NPT (the NPT is a landmark international treaty whose objective is to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons and weapons technology) in 1991 (Liberman 2001). Again, countries like Iraq, Libya, and Syria were compelled to dismantle their nuclear weapons programs through external power intervention. However, despite being a member of the NPT, Iran has been pursuing an alleged nuclear weapons program (Makdisi and Hindawi 2017). During this time, nations such as Argentina, Brazil, South Korea, and Taiwan voluntarily abandoned their efforts to develop nuclear weapons and decided to become nuclear-free states.

The history of Iran's nuclear program began during the Shah's time in the 1950s. Nevertheless, it did not generate the kind of controversy that has lingered in the last few decades during his time. During the Shah's era, Iran's nuclear program was considered 'civilian'; it was done in cooperation with the United States under the 'Atom for Peace' Programme (Shojaei and Bayli 2019). In 1967, the Tehran Nuclear Research Center (TNRC) was established, and three years later, in 1970, Iran became a signatory member of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) (Lodgaard 2007). Furthermore, in 1974, under the NPT's safeguards agreement, Iran also signed an agreement with the IAEA allowing full inspection and verification of its nuclear facilities to ensure its nuclear program remains peaceful and to check for any possible diversion into nuclear weaponization or related activities (Gerli 2019). However, after the 1979 Islamic Revolution, Iran suspended its nuclear program for some time, but later it was restarted after the Iraq-Iran War and pursued secretly. It remained secret for nearly two decades until it was revealed in 2002.

The disclosure revealed that Iran pursued weapon-grade plutonium plants in its Natanz and Arak facilities. The revelation shocked and led the international community - particularly the IAEA and the UNSC - to pressure Iran to halt its enrichment activities. Despite this, the government in Tehran did not listen to the IAEA or the UN Security Council. They said that their program was ultimately 'peaceful'. Since then, Iran has faced various unilateral and multilateral sanctions and embargos from the international community under the United Nations Security Council sanction resolutions. However, those economic sanctions are not efficient enough to convince Iran to give up its nuclear ambitions. Iran has consistently refused it by admitting that sanctions have failed to bother their socioeconomic condition or the regime's political affairs. This shows that Tehran's current and previous leadership put little or no value on integration into trade and the economy, which is also obstructed by Western countries. It instead promotes and values self-sufficiency and independent sovereignty by pursuing an independent policy that disregards Western or Eastern political legitimacy - believing that it could effectively protect its cultural values by portraying itself as the sole legitimate guardian of the Islamic Republic based on Shia Islam's principles.

Due to its lack of cooperation with the IAEA, Iran has been put under harsh sanctions by the UN and the West for the last few decades. After a series of negotiations, an interim agreement was reached in 2013. However, Iran refused to withdraw its enrichment and research activities even after the deal, claiming they were peaceful.

This work aims to comprehend and analyze the nature, strategy, and ambitions of Iranian nuclear policy to draw a picture of the civilian-military debate and, most importantly, to understand the ambitions of the Iranian nuclear program.

IRAN'S NUCLEAR AMBITION

Historically, the Persians were well-known for their cradle of science and their contributions to various fields such as medicine, mathematics, philosophy, etc. (Mishra *et al.* 2019). According to the New Scientist Report, despite international sanctions, Iran has made considerable achievements in science and technology during the past 30 years (Tatfi 2017). As per the report, Iran ranked first in the fastest scientific progress globally, and in 2011, Iran was considered the fastest developing country in the telecommunication industry. However, the country has been experiencing a 'brain drain' situation due to its limitations in opportunities affected by the 'strained' relationship with the advanced countries of the West. Thus, Iran criticized the West for its double standards and discrimination without acknowledging the importance of self-nuclear fuel production (Fitzpatrick 2017). Iran is advancing in scientific development as it successfully launched a satellite domestically, is an expert on the cloning of sheep and goats, and has the most significant number of students and publishes books related to scientific fields compared to any other Muslim country. Article II of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran reads:

the employment of sciences, technologies, and advanced human experience with the aim of their further development (...), which can be used for higher education, ethical values, scientific and technological development, rejection of foreign influence, and against tyranny, autocracy, etc. most importantly the complete strengthening of the national defense, through universal military training, to secure the country's independence, its territorial integrity, and its Islamic system. Securing self-sufficiency in sciences, technology, industry, agriculture, military affairs, and other matters (Shevlin 1998, 358).

Iran is one of the fastest-growing science and technology and rising demands on information and technology sectors and military engineering industrialization program. Historically, let us broadly look into the Iranian nuclear program. We can divide it into two main phases based on its policy, institutional structure, the behavior of the regime and leaders, and responses to the external environment. The first phase was during the Shah's regime from the 1950s till the end of the Shah's regime in 1979. This period was considered relatively peaceful under the rigid supervision of the West, particularly by the United States. After a successful 'coup' sponsored by the United States and the United Kingdom against Prime Minister Mohammad Mossadeq in August 1953, the Shah became Iran's ruler. Iran's efforts to develop a nuclear energy program started during his time in 1957 (Bayandor 2012). In 1957, the Shah signed a nuclear cooperation agreement with the US under the 'Atom for Peace' program to build a 5MW research reactor at Tehran University. During that time, Iran enjoyed close political ties with the West, particularly the United States (Sergi 2017).

The Shah's dreams of building a modern industrialized Iran based on the western institutional model, ignoring its traditional values. As a result, of Iran's nuclear program, Shah desired closer ties with the West to receive assistance and support in transforming Iran into a nuclear-capable state. Therefore, Shah showed the seeds of Iran's nuclear program, which later paved the way for developing a successful nuclear research program in Iran. Thus, in the late 1950s, the Shah implemented Iran's nuclear program under the auspices of the 'Atom for Peace' program. This program was inaugurated under the leadership of US President Dwight D. Eisenhower in Geneva at the 470th Plenary Meeting of the United Nations General Assembly, which is also known as the "Atoms for Peace Conference" (Roos 2015). The Conference aimed to develop a program of peaceful use of nuclear materials rather than their use for making bombs. The agreement also agreed to provide technical assistance and lease several kilograms of enriched uranium to all signatory member states for peaceful use.

In 1957, Iran joined the peaceful nuclear program by signing a nuclear cooperation agreement concluded under 'Atoms for Peace'. Following the bilateral agreement with the United States, the Shah established the Tehran Nuclear Research Center (TNRC) at Tehran University in 1967 to demonstrate its policy on nuclear research (Rubin 2002). Since then, TNRC has been one of the crucial players in Iran's nuclear activities. In the following year, Iran also signed the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). It was the beginning of Shah's dreams becoming a reality. Tehran nuclear project started receiving a small amount of enriched uranium (to start a 5 MWt pool-type water-moderated research reactor supplied by US nuclear company GA Technologies (Kessides 2012). A few years later, in 1974, the Shah founded Iran's Atomic Energy Organization (IAEO). That was followed by signing a contract with the German nuclear firm Kraftwerk Union, which has agreed to build the first power reactors (two 1,200 MW (e) PWR) at Bushehr (Ufomba and Dod 2010). Apart from that, Iran invested hundreds of millions of dollars in France's 'Eurodif' uranium enrichment consortium. After all, Shah announced that his future ambitions for Iran's nuclear program were to develop over 20 nuclear power reactors to produce some 23,000 MW of power energy by 1995 (Sargent 2020). Thus, during the Shah, Iran's nuclear program received active support from the United States and other European nuclear states.

With that opportunity, Shah took several steps toward acquiring a domestic plutonium separation plant for its power reactor. In an interview with the French newspaper 'The French Weekly Les' on 23 June 1974, Shah was asked if Iran would have nuclear weapons. He said, "Absolutely, without a doubt, and sooner than anyone would think" (Montgomery 2005). The Shah's statement became the bone of contention in its relations with the West, particularly the United States. The United States trade administrator, William Simon, called him a "nut" (Milani 2018). This remark, however, explains the undercurrent tensions between Iran and the United States bilateral relations. In February 1979, the Islamic Revolution toppled the Shah's government, putting a setback to the country's nuclear program.

Iran also lost many of its top nuclear scientists and engineers due to the revolution, which triggered their escape from the country. Foreign nuclear suppliers became reluctant to cooperate with the new Iranian regime, particularly after the United States campaign to bar civilian nuclear cooperation with Iran. The new Islamic government was forced to halt the construction of nuclear energy facilities as it was left without funding, talent, international assistance, or initiative and under pressure from the eight United States (Talbot 2010).

At the time of the revolution, the nuclear reactor Bushehr-1 was almost 90% completed, installing almost 60% of the necessary equipment. While the second reactor, Bushehr-2, was already 50% complete, and some others were in the planning stage to go into production within that short time (Pedraza 2015). After the Islamic Revolution of 1979 and the overthrow of the Shah, Iran became the Islamic Republic of Iran. A new theocratic state was established based on the Shiites' Islamic principles under Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini's revolutionary leader. According to the Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khomeini, who had severe religious reservations about nuclear weapons and supported a nuclear-free West Asia region, "nuclear weapons are evil and forbidden by Islamic ethics" (Mousavian 2013, 148). With its new leaders, Iran started a new foreign policy based on the ideology of an independent foreign policy of neither East nor West, focusing on protecting its great Persian civilization and maintaining its sovereignty. These new Iranian leaders refused to continue their nuclear program. Then Iran started to look toward Africa, Latin America, and East Asian countries in high demand for energy resources and shared political aspirations against Western hegemony (Ikegbu and Bassey 2019). However, the new policy did not last long, and the second phase of Iranian foreign policy developed after the end of the war and Ruhollah Khomeini's death in 1989.

Iran has historically felt insecure due to its location in a volatile geostrategic region, surrounded by hostile neighbors and backed by a powerful western ally. Again, Iran has been embroiled in a protracted war due to Iraq's use of chemical weapons, and Western powers back it. These factors have prompted the Iranian leaders to push for a new strategy for the nuclear program. The devastating war with Iraq persuaded the Iranian leaders of the need for a robust long-term deterrent capability. During the war, Iran faced chemical weapons and Scud missile attacks from Iraq. According to Richard, "the Iran-Iraq war taught the Iranians a valuable lesson about the importance of having a credible deterrent force of their own; Iran had none, and they were extremely vulnerable" (Tabatabai and Samuel 2017, 153). Therefore, the Iran-Iraq War (1980-1988) heavily influenced Ayatollah Khomeini's decision to restart Iran's nuclear program. A 2009 IAEA working document indicated that in April 1984, then-President Ali Khamenei announced to top Iranian officials that Khomeini had decided to reactivate the nuclear program as the only way to secure the Islamic Revolution from the schemes of its enemies, especially the United States and Israel.

After years of looking to the West to complete its first nuclear power plant, Iran turned its policy to Russia and China. The first protocol of the Bushehr project was signed between the two countries in March 1990. The agreement called Moscow to complete the Bushehr project and build two reactors in Tehran, but the deal was delayed due to financial problems. In 1991, Iran imported approximately 1 metric ton of uranium hexafluoride (UF₆) from China. The Islamic Republic of Iran resumed the nuclear power program in 1991 with a bilateral agreement with China to supply two 300 MW (e) PWR units of Chinese design, similar to that of the Qinshan power plant in China (Fartash 2010). Neither country reported the transfer to the IAEA (China was technically not obligated to as it was not a member of the NPT in 1991). However, Iran was obligated under its IAEA safeguards agreement to report the acquisition of the material). In 1993, the AEOI and the Russian Ministry of Atomic Energy signed an agreement to construct two Russian reactors at Bushehr. However, the contract was never carried out as Iran faced significant financial problems. Finally, in January 1995, Iran signed a contract with the Russian

Ministry of Atomic Energy to finish the reactors at Bushehr. The agreement called for Russia to complete the first reactor at Bushehr within four years, to provide a 30-50 megawatt thermal light-water research reactor, 2,000 tons of natural uranium, and training for about 15 Iranian nuclear scientists per year. Iran and Russia also agreed to discuss the construction of a gas centrifuge uranium-enrichment facility in Iran. However, in May 1995, the US announced that it had convinced Russia to cancel the centrifuge agreement. The light-water research reactor deal has also been canceled (Koch and Wolf 1997).

In 2002, a few months before the revelation of Iran's secret nuclear activities, President Bush declared Iran a part of the 'axis of evil'. The Iranian IRGC projects its relations with the US on two opposite fronts, such as sound (jebhe-e Hagh) and evil (jebhe Batel), in which the US represents evil, imperialist, hegemonic, etc. Furthermore, Iran represents a champion of resistance, fighting against meddling in regional politics and its regime and domestic interests (Veget and Quinn 2017). Regarding this issue of concern, the Supreme National Security Council of Iran (SNSC) exSecretary Hassan Rouhani appealed for a 'constructive and positive' decision - a sentiment in European countries to help make the Middle East a WMD-free zone. He also pointed out the danger posed by Israel's WMD (IRNA News 2003). It was not until an Israeli security intelligence warning that Iran's nuclear weapons program was approaching dangerously close to the point where it could not be halted that this became the most significant threat to Israel. So, since 2002, the issue has been not just the secret nuclear program but also a part of a political issue that has continued for three decades after the Islamic Revolution. There was a time when Iran benefited from the extended nuclear energy program of Russia, China, North Korea, Pakistan, and Europe, especially in terms of technology and materials for the construction of Iran's nuclear research reactor. However, the US Congress remains convinced that Tehran has pursued a clandestine nuclear weapons program without regard for legality (Voss 2014).

Table 1: List of Iran's Nuclear Facilities Under IAEA Safeguards (2014) (Source: IAEA (GOV/2014/10) (GOV/2011/7))

Location	Facilities Declared Under IAEA Safeguards
Tehran	1. Tehran Research Reactor (TRR)
	2. Molybdenum, Iodine, and Xenon Radioisotope Production Facility (MIX Facility)
	3. Jabr Ibn Hayan Multipurpose Laboratories (JHL)
Bushehr	4. Bushehr Nuclear Power Plant (BNPP)
Esfahan	5. Miniature Neutron Source Reactor (MNSR)
	6. Light Water Sub-Critical Reactor (LWSCR)
	7. Heavy Water Zero Power Reactor (HWSPR)
	8. Fuel Fabrication Laboratory (FFL)
	9. Uranium Chemistry Laboratory (UCL)
	10. Uranium Conversion Facility (UCF)
	11. Fuel Manufacturing Plant (FMP)
Natanz	12. Pilot Fuel Enrichment Plant (PFEP)
	13. Fuel Enrichment Plant (FEP)

Arak	14. Iran Nuclear Research Reactor (IR-40)
Karaj	15. Karaj Waste Storage
Darkhovin	16. 360 MW Nuclear Power Plant
Fordow	17. Fordow Fuel Enrichment Plant (FFEP)
Locations outside facilities (LOFs)	18. Nine LOFs where nuclear material is customarily used (all situated within hospitals)

According to Tofigh and Abedian (2016), Iran's nuclear program costs more than \$170 billion. Furthermore, Iran remains a weak nation with limited ability to deter external threats, and it is unclear whether a nuclear deal with the P5+1 would ensure its security.

NATURE OF IRAN'S NUCLEAR POLICY

Iran's nuclear policy is a complex issue for various reasons, mainly how Iran has dealt with international institutions and political issues related to threats and security. Other external factors include Western powers' perceptions of the issue and their pressure on non-western countries and the P5+1 (representing the international community). In addition, the issue has some distinctive characteristics because Iran is a signatory member of the NPT. Being a signatory member of the NPT, the issue is bound by legal and political considerations. Indeed, there is no standard, reliable way to characterize the nature of Iran's nuclear policy. Among the scholars and policymakers in Iran, there are strong claims of an active Iranian interest in acquiring nuclear weapons since the time of the Shah. However, no reliable source of such efforts conclusively proves their existence. The Iranian leadership has consistently argued that its nuclear efforts are for peaceful purposes, despite Western claims that Iran intends to develop nuclear weapons for security (Bahgat 2006).

Furthermore, the West has argued that nuclear proliferation by Iran could have a significant impact on the evolving balance of power in the region. In Iran's policy-making, including its nuclear policy, all crucial decisions are made or approved by the Supreme Leader. It also controlled the Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) and the powerful Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC). In the context of its nuclear policy-making, three overlapping circles affect the outcome of all decisions. Nevertheless, the final approval is made by the Supreme Leader, who is generally politically conservative (Entessar 2009). According to the constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the SNSC (Supreme National Security Council) is to determine the national defense and national security policies within the framework of general policies determined by the leaders to coordinate in areas concerned with politics, intelligence, social and cultural, economic, and foreign policy of Iran. The council is also responsible for the protection and prevention of exploitation of material and intellectual resources of the country, as well as facing internal and external threats (Thaler *et al.* 2010). As a result, SNSC is instrumental in controlling and supervising Iran's nuclear policy.

Besides, Islam also played a crucial role in Iran's nuclear program. For example, from an Islamic point of view, Iran's attitudes towards the international community are derived from

traditional Shiite doctrines. Therefore, at the regional level, Iran finds it challenging to have good diplomatic relations with other Sunni-dominated countries due to deep sectarian division. In contrast, at the global level, Iran finds it hard to deal with the 'civilizational' difference with the West, particularly the United States. So, to have a successful security policy, Iran needs a solid caveat to protect its politics. The controversial nuclear program of the Islamic Republic of Iran can be divided into two main issues - legal and political. The legal issues are related to NPT obligations and various other extended treaties and agreements that must be dealt with through the IAEA and the UNSC. Secondly, the political issues concern security, ideology, perception, national interests, etc. These are issues that require political and diplomatic dealings.

LEGAL ISSUES INVOLVING IRAN NUCLEAR DEALINGS

Iran is considered one of the founding members of the IAEA and is also a signatory member of the Treaty on Nonproliferation (NPT) (Braun and Chyba 2004). Iran established its Atomic Energy Organisation of Iran (AEOI) in 1974 to acquire a civilian nuclear program that could produce power as a long-term ambition. It includes an ambition to master the nuclear fuel cycle domestically. During the Shah's time, Iran agreed with the Western country's nuclear firm worth the US \$4-6 billion to develop the Bushehr nuclear power plant (Tarock 2006). However, following the 1979 Islamic Revolution, international nuclear cooperation with Iran was withdrawn and cut off all support for constructing its nuclear power facility. After the end of the Iran-Iraq war, Iran submitted a report to the IAEA notifying it that its nuclear development was continued and asking for scientific and technological support to fill the knowledge gap. The Agency showed positive responses, but due to US pressure, the Agency was unwilling to help Iran (Rezaei 2019). Following the revolution and the hostage-taking of the American Embassy in Tehran, most Western countries were unable to help Iran finish its nuclear power plants. As a result, Iran started to ask non-Western nuclear states, like China and Russia, for help with their nuclear programs.

In 2002, during Iran's nuclear revelation, the US was busy in its war in Afghanistan and intervened in Iraq over the issue of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and terrorism. Thus, it was not only Iran but also the international community's fears of another military action against Iran's nuclear facilities, with or without transferring the issue to the Security Council. However, almost everyone in the international community and the Agency wanted to end the conflict peacefully. The IAEA Director-General, M. ElBaradei (from December 1997 until November 2009), immediately held a meeting with President M. Khatami regarding the secret disclosure of Iran's nuclear program. The Agency's board members began to discuss the immediate implementation of the NPT safeguards agreement with Iran in June 2003. In November 2003, in his concluding remarks on Iran's non-compliance with the NPT Safeguards Agreement, under the implication of Article III of the NPT, it was also announced that the multilateral talks with EU3 agreed to suspend its uranium enrichment activities and sign an Additional Protocol to its Safeguards Agreement, granting the IAEA greater inspection authority over Iran's facilities (Soltanieh 2005). It demanded free and open verification of Iran's nuclear facilities to clarify various outstanding issues, including the past and present Iranian activities related to nuclear proliferation. The process was developed through negotiation with the EU3 and Iran, in cooperation and support

from the IAEA. The Agency's report on Iran's nuclear program was almost closely similar or comparable to its refusal to fully cooperate, ignoring most of the Agency's demanding reports and with limited access to inspecting its facilities. However, after two years, in August 2005, the Agency reported mentions of breaches, constituted non-compliance, and removal of Agency seals with the starting of its process lines and the UF at the Uranium Conversion Facility in Isfahan (Ritter 2018). The newly elected President M. Ahmadinejad was responsible for Iran's withdrawal from the Paris agreement. His view was the opposite of his predecessor, President A. Rafsanjani's policy on nuclear arrangements. He criticized A. Rafsanjani as a facade of liberalism and political change, showing softening toward the West, which had polluted the revolutionary principles through corruption and materialism (Ansari 2007). So finally, in March 2006, IAEA Director-General M. ElBaradei reported the issue of Iran's nuclear controversy to the UN Security Council following the Agency's board meeting (Thakur 2012).

Contrary to the request of the Board of Governors, Iran has neither implemented the Additional Protocol nor cooperated with the Agency in connection with the remaining issues, which give rise to concern regarding the possibility of military dimensions in Iran's nuclear program. With its limited options in the Agency and rising awareness of danger among the international community due to limited cooperation from Iran, the IAEA board of governors was forced to refer the matter to the United Nations Security Council. The Agency report mentions Iran's ignorance of and breaches the obligation to comply with the NPT safeguard agreement. The reports reached the United Nations Security Council on 4 February 2006 (Mousavian and Mousavian 2018). It was nearly two months after M. Ahmadinejad announced the resumption of uranium enrichment activities in Natanz and Arak research facilities.

Following the consideration, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) issued a notice to Iran to cancel all enrichment activities. It recommended ratifying by re-implementing the additional protocol demanded by the IAEA. It was nothing less than a warning, calling Iran to cooperate with the IAEA guidelines. However, Iran continues to ignore the Security Council's suggestion. Therefore, on 31 July 2006, citing Article 40 of the UN Charter, the UN Security Council passed Resolution 1696, giving Iran a formal deadline of 31 August 2006 to take the required steps or face further Security Council actions until Iran agrees to accept the IAEA's previous resolution (Lodgaard 2016). The resolutions were designed to impose targeted sanctions measures to constrain Iran's development of sensitive technologies in support of its stopping its uranium enrichment and related activities. As a result of Iran's failure to comply with the UN Security Council's resolution on the IAEA, the UN Security Council subsequently followed a series of failed negotiations between Iran and the P5+1, as well as a series of resolutions with new additional extensive sanctions under Article 41 of Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter. In articles 40 and 41, Chapter VII of the UN Charter states that:

(Article 40) In order to prevent an aggravation of the situation, the Security Council may, before making the recommendations or deciding upon the measures provided for in Article 39, call upon the parties concerned to comply with such provisional measures as it deems necessary or desirable. Such provisional measures shall be without prejudice to the rights, claims, or position of the parties concerned. The Security Council shall duly take account of failure to comply with such provisional measures (...) (Article 41) The Security Council may

decide what measures not involving the use of armed force are to be employed to give effect to its decisions, and it may call upon the Members of the United Nations to apply such measures. These may include complete or partial interruption of economic relations and rail, sea, air, postal, telegraphic, radio, other means of communication, and the severance of diplomatic relations (Kelsen 2000, 93).

The US and European countries proposed the dual-track strategy against Iran because they believe it will successfully change Iran's nuclear and ballistic missile policies. It advocates that nobody in the Security Council proposed denying Iran's rights or preventing Iran from benefiting from developing a peaceful nuclear energy program. Indeed, they also want Iran to be bound by non-proliferation safeguards listed in Articles I, II, and III of the NPT as per the 1970 agreement. The 1970 Iran-NPT safeguard agreement (Articles 1, II, and III) indicates that;

(Article I) Each NWS is not to transfer to any recipient whatsoever nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices directly or indirectly; and not in any way to assist, encourage, or induce any NNWS to manufacture, acquire, and control any weapons or explosive devices.

(Article II) Each NNWS Party to the Treaty undertakes not to receive the transfer from any transferor directly or indirectly, not to manufacture, not to acquire, and not to seek or receive any assistance in the manufacture of nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.

(Article III) Each NNWS Party to the Treaty undertakes to accept safeguards, as outlined in an agreement to be negotiated and concluded with the IAEA on verification of the fulfillment of its obligations to prevent diversion of nuclear energy from peaceful uses to nuclear weapons. It needs to maintain safeguard through IAEA in transferring all nuclear-related items (Hafemeister 2016, 190).

Earlier, the legal debate was predominantly the US, the UK, France, and Germany, which was meant to justify their actions against Iran's nuclear issue. However, later, China and Russia turned to actively participating in this legal fight. They made a legal argument with solid diplomatic backing for the issue. While the common thesis is that international law is at the core of their legal argument, it was also considered a part of diplomatic dialogue. For the past few years, the international community has failed to resolve Iran's problematic activities at its nuclear facilities. Throughout this period, Iran has constantly argued that its development and implementation of new technology in its nuclear facilities are purely for civilian purposes. Therefore, it is permitted under the NPT. Iran has also attempted to take countermeasures based on its safeguard obligations under the NPT legal conditions. Iran has argued that the obligations imposed on it by Security Council resolutions are incompatible with its NPT obligations. According to NPT Article IV, which guarantees the inalienable rights of all parties, the right to develop research, production, and use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes without discrimination is guaranteed under the same Treaty (Shenasaei and Shirvani 2014). So, Tehran claims the ongoing program is a legal right, and it does not violate the NPT's norms. Article IV,

Paragraph 1 of the NPT also guarantees all state parties the 'inalienable right' to conduct peaceful nuclear research and material production for peaceful nuclear energy purposes.

Iran typically demands and fights for its NPT rights, including all parties' ability to facilitate, participate in, and exchange equipment, materials, and scientific and technological information for peaceful purposes under Article IV of the NPT. Furthermore, they also demanded full implementation and protection from discrimination related to developing research, production, and nuclear energy for peaceful purposes without discrimination (Fleck 2016). Nothing in the NPT can change the right of all the countries that signed it to research, produce, and use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes without discrimination and following Articles I and II of the Treaty.

The Islamic Republic of Iran argued in one of its letters to the Director-General of the IAEA that the use of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) is an "unforgivable sin" and proposed the concept of a "nuclear-weapon-free Middle East" (Mousavian 2008, 147). In 2013, Iran and the P5+1 agreed on Iran's nuclear crisis, also known as the Geneva Interim Agreement and officially titled the Joint Plan of Action, signed in Geneva, Switzerland. On 23 December 2013, Iran and P5+1 negotiators reached a successful interim agreement. Iran has accepted invites from the IAEA's inspector to their facilities. They receive the right to uranium enrichment, but the legal justification will be decided in six months.

POLITICAL ISSUE WITH IRAN'S NUCLEAR PROGRAMME

After revealing Iran's secret nuclear program in 2002, it escalated political confrontation and debates between Iran and the major Western powers. Then US President George W. Bush's administration hastily set the course for military action to deter the secret nuclear program. While the European powers, Russia and China, caught between Washington's demands and their own strategic and economic interests in Iran, have preferred to appease the US. The West imposed unilateral sanctions on Iran as the US has repeatedly stated that all options, including a military attack, are on the table. The Iranian leaders' primary goal in ongoing nuclear projects and activities is to produce the nuclear fuel cycle, as they already have the technology, facilities, capabilities, and knowledge. In a press conference in 2006, Zarif stated that Western threats and pressure did not work with Iran, so negotiation would be the solution. Tehran was ready, just as Iran was ready to impose a ban on nuclear weapons. Iran also claims that the Western powers use the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the UN Security Council as tools to further their political goals.

Similarly, Porter (2014) stated that Israel and the United States claim Iran's pursuit of a secret nuclear militarization program was 'manufactured', as the accusations are false. To him, the western claims on Iran's nuclear-weapons program have all been based on false history and falsified records of the description presented by think-tank experts and in the media. Likewise, Iranian leaders have often criticized Western powers for having purely political motives that do not justify the minimum standards of legitimacy and legality. In response, Iranian leaders repeatedly stated that their nuclear issues are more political than legal and that Western countries' use of language threats and force against their civilian nuclear facilities is entirely

unacceptable. Ahmadinejad also said Iran did not maintain any allies in Europe or the United States, so the Agency pressured and treated Iran 'politically' beyond legal bounds.

In contrast to what Iran thinks, the West, especially the United States, thinks that Iran is breaking international law by trying to get nuclear power and making other WMD-capable missiles. The West also believes that Iran's domestic political and social system is based on Imam Mahdi's Shiite Islamic ideology (Gordon 2012). In addition, it is thought that Iran's view of Mahdi is another form of violence, much like the strong support, as former President Ahmadinejad said, to get rid of Israel from the Middle East. Western powers believe Iran's nuclear policy goal is to acquire nuclear weapon capability. Iran's nuclear bomb is the most likely threat to regional peace and stability due to its asymmetrical military capability, which will lead to a severe nuclear arms race in the region. Beyond the region, nuclear proliferation has become an eminent direct threat to the international community, particularly the US security interests in the region and beyond (Patrikarakos 2012).

It is important to note that Iran, after the revolution became the most prominent and hostile nation in the West Asia region, especially towards one of its most trusted allies, Israel. The United States views Iran as one of the most dangerous nations that openly supports and sponsors international terrorism (Naji 2008). Thus, the West has a severe fear of a nuclear Iran, which could proliferate sensitive nuclear technologies and materials into the wrong hands, particularly non-state actors or terrorist groups (Ouhiba 2021). In 2002, former President Bush listed Iran in the 'axis of evil' for supporting terrorism and seeking WMD. The US State Department's (2013) report on global terrorism listed Iran as a state-sponsor of terrorism. It said that Iran had helped fund, arm, and train many regional armed groups, including Hamas, Hezbollah, the Palestinian Islamic Jihad, the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command (PFLP-GC), which were all fighting against the peace process between Israel and Palestine.

Table 2: The List of Iran's Alleged Involvement in Terrorist Attack (Source: Katzman 2015)

The Date of the Attack	Event and Claimed Perpetrator
18 April 1983	Iran's sponsored group (Hezbollah) is accused of bombing the US Embassy in Beirut, Lebanon. Hezbollah killed 63 people, including 17 Americans.
18 April 1983	Iran's sponsored group (Hezbollah) is accused of bombing US Marine barracks in Beirut. Hezbollah killed 241 Marines using a car bomb.
12 December 1983	The Da'wa Party of Iraq-Iran supported the Iraqi Shiite militant group, which bombed the US and French Embassies in Kuwait City, resulting in five fatalities.
20 September 1984	The truck bombing of the US Embassy annex in Beirut killed 23 people. Iran's sponsored group (Hezbollah) is accused of carrying out the terror.
25 May 1985	Iran is said to have some links with the suicide bomber who drove a car bomb into the royal car carrying the emir of Kuwait.
14 June, 1985	The group Hezbollah, which Iran backs, is blamed for hijacking TWA flight 847, where US Navy diver Robert Stethem was tortured and killed.
5 April 1988	Iran's sponsored group (Hezbollah) is accused of hijacking a Kuwait Airways flight, resulting in two persons' death.
17 March 1992	Hezbollah, the Iranian-backed Lebanese terrorist organization, was said to be behind the bombing of the Israeli Embassy in Argentina's capital of Buenos Aires.
16 July 1994	Iran is accused of sponsoring Hezbollah in the bombing of the Argentine-Jewish Mutual Association (AMIA) building in Buenos Aires by Hezbollah.

25 June 1996	Iran is accused of sponsoring Hezbollah in the bombing of the Khobar Towers housing complex near Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, where 19 US Air Force personnel were killed.
19 July 2012	Hezbollah is said to have been sponsored by the Iranian government to bomb a bus, killing five Israeli tourists and one Bulgarian.
July-August 2006	Iran was accused of precipitating a conflict with Israel through the Hezbollah cross-border raid.
11 October 2011	United States officials alleged there was a plot tied to the Iranian government to assassinate Saudi ambassador Adel al-Jubeir in the United States
13 February 2012	An Israeli diplomat's wife was wounded when a bomb was planted under her car in New Delhi.
19 July 2012	A bus bombing in 2012 killed five Israeli tourists and their Bulgarian driver.

IRAN'S NUCLEAR POLICY: A STRATEGY

Why do nations like Iran pursue nuclear weapons? Many political approaches attempt to explain why Iran proliferates. The approaches are all different, but the all-encompassing model tries to explain everything at a particular analytic level. Sagan (2011) argues that the conventional wisdom for (nuclear or WMD) proliferation is security-driven. He means that threats in the international political system drive state to proliferate, much like Iran's security situation, which demands it. Historically, Iran experienced humiliating events from external intervention, insecurity because of being a weak state, threats from external powers, isolation from international communities, and exploitive behavior from the existing international institutions. Iran usually lacks trust as it falls back on discrimination toward international institutions. Iran has repeatedly criticized institutional legitimacy for applying a double standard to Iran. So, it believes the existing international institutions are instruments of western powers and that their acts of injustice and ignorance towards the Islamic republic were justified.

Since Iran has had protracted conflicts, it is usually connected to proliferation. Nuclear proliferation is generally a function of states engaged in conflicts. This is due to the states' having acute security threats. Sometimes, states may proliferate to obtain self-sufficient security, enhance national prestige, or acquire bargaining leverage capacity. The variables are shaped by a state's engagement in a particular conflict. Thus, the factors behind Iran's nuclear policy never represent a single key reason for invoking its proliferation options since the country faces multiple security threats. Iran's nuclear ambition is characterized by the experience of external threat and influence and national interest in promoting its defensive capability. Some of the immediate threats are the Iran-Iraq war and rivalries, Iran-Israel competition, and becoming a rival global hegemonic power to the United States. In addition, the other factors are political and economic isolation, the threat of external intervention, and promoting and protecting the Islamic regime. The Iranian people's culture, ideology, Islamic beliefs, and leadership are also the main factors shaping their worldview, sometimes related to their nuclear policy. Iranian leaders also have the crucial responsibility for reflecting different views and opinions in the decision-making process, particularly regarding nuclear policy. So, to maintain national security, sovereignty, and prestige, Iran's national perspective on its nuclear policy is shaped by various variables, threats, and insecurity. Most importantly, the necessary political and security demand for deterrence capability lies as the primary motives behind Iran's nuclear policy.

The Islamic Republic of Iran has an important place in the world system because of its current geostrategic location and abundance of hydrocarbon resources. This attracts external

powers, making it the most critical determinant of Iran's critical national security and strategic concerns. At the beginning of the XX century, Iran was dominated by British and Soviet colonialism, followed by the United States' influence in Iran's domestic political and economic affairs by the 1940s. Among the Arab states, under the Saddam Hussein regime, Iraq was the key regional competitor and a threat to the Islamic Republic of Iran. In early 1980, Iraq under Saddam invaded Iran and broke out into a protracted war (Iran-Iraq war 1980-1988), which was one of the biggest challenges for Iran to save its Islamic government in Tehran as the issue was asymmetrical military capability. It was an unforgettable and embarrassing experience for Iran. During that long war, Iraq used chemical and biological weapons against Iranian civilians, and much of the Iranian population were victims of those illegal weapons (Walker 2017).

Moreover, the UN Security Council and the western powers refused to designate Iraq as an aggressor state and officially opposed Iraq's use of chemical and biological weapons illicitly under international law. Instead, Western powers support Iraq by providing advanced military arms. So, Iran became the victim of Iraq's invasion. Iran fought the war without receiving support from the international community (Mattair 2008). It was Iran's deadliest war, as many lives were lost. It was also a disgraceful defeat for them because Tehran was forced to accept the cease-fire to avoid further civilian deaths.

Most Iranian leaders feel the Iraq-Iran war represents the most critical milestone in the history of Iran's security doctrine (Venter 2005). After the end of the war and the death of Ruhollah Khomeini, the two new Iranian leaders, Ali Khamenei and Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani became the Supreme Leader and President, respectively. The two leaders made a serious effort to strengthen Iran's strategic capability with the ambition to address any such possible threats effectively. The Iraq-Iran war left a significant impression on President Rafsanjani, who became the most consistent proponent of WMD. In 1989, Rafsanjani addressed the IRGC. He said;

Chemical and biological weapons are poor man's atomic bombs and can be quickly produced. We should at least consider them for our defense. Although the use of such weapons is inhuman, the war taught us that international laws are just scraps of paper. Concerning chemical, bacteriological, and radiological weapons training, it was made very clear during the war that these weapons are very decisive (...) We should fully equip ourselves both in the offensive and defensive use of chemical, bacteriological, and radiological weapons (Cordesma 1999, 234).

An exceedingly shocking experience pushed Iranian leaders to adopt a new policy that preferred to go for a nuclear weapons program and become a regional hegemony power. They shift diplomacy to a more pragmatic approach because all of their neighbors can not be true friends while the West refuses to cooperate with Iran. This was one of the main reasons Iran started talking about 'self-help' to improve its military power (when trying to get nuclear power). Furthermore, since the US and NATO allies began an intervention in Iran's neighboring countries (Afghanistan and Iraq), there has been a tremendous impact on the Iranian people and its top decision-makers because of fear of possible military action. As a result, Iranian leaders believed that the only possible option was to possess a self-defensive capability to deter similar threats in the future to deal with such fears and insecurity. According to Kenneth Waltz, "in the moments

of fear when a hegemonic power threatens a country like Iran, the only possible option is to deter with a nuclear weapon" (Knepper 2008, 75).

Also, Iranians have often felt that the protection of Israel in the region is the West's priority. The US has always considered the survival of Israel as a matter of its national interest and has officially announced that it considers Israel a friend and ally. Likewise, both the US and Israel see Iran as a more significant threat than the Saddam regime in Iraq (Larrabee and Nader 2013). However, Iran thinks the more significant threat to the region is Israel, which continues to be a more significant threat. This is because Israel is the only nuclear-weapon state in the region that is not a signatory to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), and the Convention on the Prohibition of Ballistic Missiles and WMD. However, from Israel's point of view, Iran's nuclear ambitions pose a possible future nuclear threat. The existence of Israel, the only non-Muslim with a nuclear weapon capability in the region, is considered a direct and imminent threat to Iran. Iran's nuclear program is an imminent and existential security threat for Israel from direct military and proxy wars.

Similarly, for the Arab states, it is a sign of Iran's drive for regional domination, so "the basic fact is that the Iranian nuclear program poses a serious and equal threat to all the GCC states" (Chubin 2010). However, Iran is against the Western policy in the region as it views it as the West's imperialism and colonialism in the Islamic region. Thus, they need to maintain their status quo to maintain this status, which means Iran has to possess self-protection or defensive capabilities.

The loud and proudly championed bellicose tones of Ahmadinejad against the United States and Israel have magnified fear. The Islamic Revolution of 1979 also reflects the beginning of a new strange conflict with the US. It carries the solid psychological force of being anti-American or anti-Western in their culture and foreign policy. Tehran is against the Western policy in the region, as it views it as the West's imperialism and colonialism in the Islamic region. They need to maintain their status quo to maintain this status, which means Iran has to possess self-protection or defensive capabilities.

CONCLUSION

Despite numerous efforts, the question of Iran's nuclear policy remains a controversial issue producing an intense debate in both regional and global affairs. Iran's nuclear program has been at the center of global attention in the last few decades. Iran's position and image in international affairs are determined by its nuclear activities. On the one hand, Iran has been asserting its right to pursue nuclear activities as a signatory to the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). In contrast, the international community led by the United States and its European allies has been putting intense pressure and scrutiny on Iran's nuclear program due to the clandestine nature of its nuclear activities. Though Iran claims it has a peaceful program, the US, Israel, the West, and many countries, including its neighbors, have constantly asserted the military nature of Iran's nuclear activities. According to them, Iran is 'secretly' building its facilities with the ambition of acquiring nuclear weapons. Thus, with all these claims and counterclaims, Iran's nuclear controversy dominates the headlines and remains a significant

challenge to the international community. European sanctions (both unilateral and multilateral) or 'restrictive measures' have been in place since 2007. The EU has advocated for them as part of its dual-track approach to pressuring Iran to accept NPT obligations.

Meanwhile, Russia and China are Iran's two most prominent and leading economic and energy partners. Both the countries also benefited from filling the gap created by Iran and western competition in closing the balancing tie with Iran. The two countries are also the key technology suppliers in developing Iran's advanced missile program. At the same time, Iran, China, and Russia wanted a multilateral world against the US hegemony in the global political system.

COMPLIANCE WITH ETHICAL STANDARDS

Acknowledgments:

Not applicable.

Funding:

Not applicable.

Statement of human rights:

This article does not contain any studies with human participants performed by any authors.

Statement on the welfare of animals:

This article does not contain any studies with animals performed by any authors.

Informed consent:

Not applicable.

REFERENCES

1. Amiard, Jean-Claude. 2021. "Disarmament and Decommissioning in the Nuclear Domain." New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons.
2. Ansari, Ali M. 207. "Chapter Two: The Triumph of the Authoritarians." *The Adelphi Papers* 47(393): 23-40.
3. Bahgat, Gawdat. 2006. "Nuclear Proliferation: The Islamic Republic of Iran". *Iranian Studies* 39(3): 307-327.
4. Bayandor, Darioush. 2012. "The Fall of Mosaddeq, August 1953: Institutional Narratives, Professor Mark Gasiorowski and My Study." *Iranian Studies* 45(5): 679-691.
5. Braun, Chaim, and Christopher F. Chyba. 2004. "Proliferation rings: New challenges to the nuclear non-proliferation regime." *International Security* 29(2): 5-49.
6. Chubin, Shahram. 2010. "Iran's nuclear ambitions". Washington: Brookings Institution Press.
7. Cordesman, Anthony. 1999. "Iraq and the war of sanctions: Conventional threats and weapons of mass destruction." Connecticut: Greenwood Publishing Group.
8. Entessar, Nader. 2006. "Iran's nuclear decision-making calculus." *Middle East Policy* 16(2): 26-33.
9. Fabius, Laurent. 2016. "Inside the Iran Deal: A French perspective." *The Washington Quarterly* 39(3): 7-38.
10. Fartash, Barvarz. 2010. "Islamic Atomic Bomb Cookbook." Indiana: Trafford Publishing.
11. Fitzpatrick, Mark. 2017. "Asia's Latent Nuclear Powers: Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan: Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan." New York: Routledge.
12. Fleck, Dieter. 2016. "The Right to Develop Research, Production, and Use of Nuclear Energy for Peaceful Purposes: Shortcomings and Loopholes in Legal Regulation." South Holland: TMC Asser Press.
13. Gerli, Michele. 2019. "Beyond nuclear ambiguity: the Iranian nuclear crisis and the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action." New York: Routledge.
14. Hafemeister, David. 2016. "Nuclear Proliferation and Terrorism in the Post-9/11 World." New York: Springer.
15. Ikegbu, Ephraim Ahamefula, and Samuel Akpan Bassey. 2019. "Ahamefula: Discovering Leadership Gaps Of The African Being." *Cogito* 11(4): 75-89.
16. Joyner, Treasa. 2011. "Interpreting the nuclear non-proliferation Treaty." North Carolina: Oxford University Press.
17. Kelsen, Hans. 2000. *The law of the United Nations: a critical analysis of its fundamental problems: with supplement*. New Jersey: The Lawbook Exchange, Ltd.
18. Kessides, Ioannis. 2012. "The Future of the Nuclear Industry Reconsidered: Risks, uncertainties, and continued promise." *Energy Policy* 48(1): 185-208.
19. Kibaroglu, Mar. 2006. "Good for the Shah, banned for the mullahs: The West and Iran's quest for nuclear power". *The Middle East Journal*, 60(2): 207-232.
20. Knepper, Jennifer. 2008. "Nuclear Weapons and Iranian strategic culture." *Comparative Strategy* 27(5): 451-468.

21. Koch, Andrew, and Jeanette Wolf. 1997. "Iran's nuclear procurement program: How close to the bomb?." *The Nonproliferation Review* 5(1): 123-135.
22. Larrabee, F. Stephen, and Alireza Nader. 2013. "Turkish-Iranian relations in a changing Middle East." Santa Monica: Rand Corporation.
23. Liberman, Peter. 2001. "The rise and fall of the South African bomb." *International Security* 26(2): 45-86.
24. Lodgaard, Sverre. 2007. "Iran's uncertain nuclear ambitions." In *Nuclear proliferation and international security*, pp. 120-141. New York: Routledge.
25. Lodgaard, Sverre. 2016. "Nuclear Diplomacy: The Case of Iran." New York: Routledge.
26. Makdisi, Karim, and Coralie Pison Hindawi. 2017. "The Syrian chemical weapons disarmament process in context: narratives of coercion, consent, and everything in between." *Third World Quarterly* 38(8): 1691-1709.
27. Mattair, Thomas. 2008. "Bitter Friends, Bosom Enemies: Iran, the US, and the Twisted Path to Confrontation". *Middle East Policy*, 15(2): 164-169.
28. Milani, Mohsen. 2018. "The making of Iran's Islamic revolution: from monarchy to Islamic republic." New York: Routledge.
29. Mishra, Shri Kant, Hadi Mohammad Khanli, Golnoush Akhlaghipour, Ghazaleh Ahmadi Jazi, and Shaweta Khosa. 2019. "Historical perspective of neurology in Iran." *Iranian Journal of Neurology* 18(1): 25-31.
30. Montgomery, Alexander. 2005. "Ringing in proliferation: How to dismantle an atomic bomb network." *International Security* 30(2): 153-187.
31. Mousavian, Hossein. 2008. "Iran-Europe relations: challenges and opportunities." New York: Routledge.
32. Mousavian, Seyed, and Mohammad Mousavian. 2018. "Building on the Iran nuclear deal for international peace and security." *Journal for Peace and Nuclear Disarmament* 1(1): 169-192.
33. Mousavian, Seyed. 2013. "Globalising Iran's Fatwa Against Nuclear Weapons." *Survival* 55(2): 147-162.
34. Naseer, Rizwan, and Musarat Amin. 2020. "Cyber-threats to strategic networks: Challenges for Pakistan's security." *South Asian Studies* 33(1):43-52.
35. Ouhiba, Nawel Meriem. 2021. "Resistance and Counter-Hegemonic Discourse in Laila Halaby's West of the Jordan". *GNOSI: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Human Theory and Praxis* 4 (2):85-95.
36. Pedraza, Jorge. 2015. "The Iranian Nuclear Program and the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action." *Current Politics and Economics of the Middle East* 6(4): 783-789.
37. Rezaei, Farhad. 2019. "Iran's foreign policy after the nuclear agreement." London: Palgrave Macmillan.
38. Ritter, Scott. 2018. "Dealbreaker: Donald Trump and the Unmaking of the Iran Nuclear Deal." Los Angeles:
39. Roos, Eloise. 2015. "Atom of war: Competing theories of nuclear disarmament & non-proliferation: Comparing qualitative & quantitative approaches." Missouri: Webster University Press.

40. Rubin, Michael. 2002. "Iran's Burgeoning WMD Programs." *Middle East Intelligence Bulletin* 4(3): 34-39.
41. Sagan, Scott. 2011. "The causes of nuclear weapons proliferation." *Annual Review of Political Science* 14 (3): 225-244.
42. Sargent, Jack. 2020. "More than a Historical Sidenote: The Nuclear Ambitions of the Shah of Iran." *Corvinus Journal of International Affairs* 5(1): 1-9.
43. Sergi, Sabrina. 2017. "The US-Iran Relations and the Shah's Nuclear Program (1957-1978)." *Eunomia. Rivista semestrale di Storia e Politica Internazionali* 1(1): 141-160.
44. Shenasaee, Hedayatollah, and Faramarz Shirvani. 2014. "Article IV of the NPT treaty and legitimacy of sensitive nuclear activities." *Asian Social Science* 10(3):120-128.
45. Shevlin, Neil. 1998. "Velayat-e faqih in the constitution of Iran: The implementation of theocracy." *Journal of Constitutional Law* 1(8): 358-382.
46. Shojaei, Hasan Fadaei, and Hasan Ali Bayli. 2019. "The role of America in the development trend of Iranian nuclear program." *Opción: Revista de Ciencias Humanas y Sociales* 22 (1): 1135-1151.
47. Soltanieh, Ali. 2005 "Iranian nuclear activities and interaction with the IAEA." *Atoms for Peace: An International Journal* 1(1): 95-108.
48. Tabatabai, Ariane, and Annie Samuel. 2017. "What the Iran-Iraq war tells us about the future of the Iran nuclear deal." *International Security* 42(1): 152-185.
49. Talbott, Strobe. 2010. *Engaging India: Diplomacy, democracy, and the bomb*. Washington: Brookings Institution Press.
50. Tarock, Adam. 2006. "Iran's nuclear programme and the West." *Third World Quarterly* 27(4): 645-664.
51. Tatfi, Samuel. 2017. "Regional Innovation System Analysis Model: The Case Of Iran". *Lebanese Science Journal*, 18(2): 264-260.
52. Thakur, Ramesh. 2012. "To Stop Iran Getting the Bomb, Must We Learn to Live with Its Nuclear Capability?." *Strategic Analysis* 36 (2): 328-334.
53. Thakur, Ramesh. 2015. *Nuclear weapons and international security: Collected essays*. New York: Routledge.
54. Thaler, David E., Alireza Nader, Shahram Chubin, Charlotte Lynch, and Jerrold D. Green. 2010. "Mullahs, guards, and bonyads: An exploration of Iranian leadership dynamics." Santa Monica: Rand Corporation.
55. Tofigh, Aan, and Abedian, Marq. 2016. "Analysis of energy status in Iran for designing sustainable energy roadmap". *Renewable and Sustainable Energy Reviews* 57(4): 1296-1306.
56. Ufomba, Henry., and Robert, Dode. 2010. "Which way to Tehran? The pre-emptive airstrike, cumulative diplomacy, technical isolation, and the Iranian nuclear crises." *Journal of Public Administration and Policy Research* 2(3): 46-52.
57. Vogel, Benjamin, and Jason C. Quinn. 2017. "Economic evaluation of small modular nuclear reactors and the complications of regulatory fee structures." *Energy Policy* 104(1): 395-403.
58. Venter, Al. 2005. "Iran's nuclear option: Tehran's quest for the atom bomb." Oxford: Casemate.

59. Voss, Susan. 2014. "Scoping intangible proliferation related to peaceful nuclear programs: Tracking nuclear proliferation within a commercial nuclear power program." *Sokolski, Moving beyond Pretense* 2(1): 149-152.
60. Walker, David. 2017. "An agonizing death: 1980s US policy on Iraqi chemical weapons during the Iran-Iraq War." *The Journal of the Middle East and Africa* 8(2): 175-196.
61. Woolgar-James, Richard. 2016. "The future of nuclear disarmament: The problematic estimates of China's nuclear strength." *Comparative Strategy* 35(1): 43-57

Copyright © 2022 The author/s
This work is licensed under a CC-BY 3.0 license
(* Corresponding author
Peer review method: Double-blind
Received: 11.03.2022
Accepted: 24.03.2022
Published: 14.06.2022
Review article
DOI: <https://www.doi.org/10.47305/JLIA2282223p>


How to cite:


Pattnaik, Jajati K., and Chandan K. Panda. 2022. "CHINA'S GEO-ECONOMIC INTEREST IN AFRICA: A SHORT OVERVIEW". Journal of Liberty and International Affairs 8 (2):223-39. <https://e-jlia.com/index.php/jlia/article/view/608>.



CHINA'S GEO-ECONOMIC INTEREST IN AFRICA: A SHORT OVERVIEW

Jajati K. Pattnaik¹, Chandan K. Panda^{2*}

¹Jawaharlal Nehru University - New Delhi, India  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8382-9804> ✉ jajatipattnaik2017@gmail.com

²Rajiv Gandhi University - Itanagar, India  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9000-830X> ✉ chandan.panda@rgu.ac.in

Abstract: *The article examines China's geo-economic interest in Africa. China intends to exercise its leverage over both coastal frontiers for trade and defense and its hinterland for rich mineral, metal, and fossil deposits. Furthermore, the debt trap seems to be one of the methods through which China intended to bargain with Africa to bag as much advantage as it could gain. The question that emerges from this critical engagement with China-Africa relations is to look into how the reality of Africa's narrative of development is projected both from outside and within and the contradiction embodied in that projection. China used the narrative of development to set its feet on African soil. This paper discusses China's penetration into Africa by offering interest-free loans and its gradual emergence as a neocolonial power through expanding its network. The method used in the study to establish China's monopoly and interfering streak in African affairs through BRI is the analysis of available data based on which the objectives and the conclusions are drawn.*

Keywords: *Africa; China; BRI; Debt Diplomacy; Geo-Economics*

INTRODUCTION

China in Africa is not an overnight phenomenon. It understands Africa and African needs. On the other hand, Africa needs any investing nation to give its collapsing economy at least a semblance of strength. There seems to be a serious asymmetry between its increasing demography and poor GDP, which "accounts today for around 17% of the world's population, but only 3% of global GDP" (Coleman 2020). To secure a balance between its rising population and fragile GDP, it indubitably needed the investors to at least seemingly overcome the crisis. The resource-rich Africa was technologically handicapped to convert its assets into an economy. Therefore, the African dependencies invited many investors such as the USA, Europe, China, etc. China committed to better deals and faster delivery among its overseas investors, tactically sidelining the quality aspect of the projects earmarked for faster completion. The apparent appetite for African markets, the need for modernization and industrialization of Africa, and its geostrategic significance as a global middle seem to have provided China the field to actualize its ambition to emerge as a singular global power. This tendency of China triggers the rivalry

between the USA and China. Here unstoppable China meets the irremovable USA. This unholy and antithetical engagement leads them to the brink of the historical 'Thucydides trap', "a deadly pattern of structural stress that results when a rising power challenges a ruling power" (Allison 2017).

Therefore, it would be too naive to suggest that the China-Africa interface is structured to achieve comprehensive development in Africa and fulfill the vision of reciprocal growth. Africa, on the contrary, seems to have become the meeting point of two rival powers vying for supremacy. China's percolation into Africa is assumed to have been arranged to pose a significant challenge to the seemingly protective and receding USA. Beijing, therefore, intensifies its Africa ambition through its robust BRI structuralism. However, there is no denying that Beijing's intervention in Africa has triggered massive infrastructural and communication-related development. Having outlined the emerging scenario that emanates from Africa with China's intensification of geo-economic attention through BRI, the competition it presents to the USA there, and the ramifications of the entire ongoing exercise on Africa, the paper discusses BRI in Africa, bilateral trade, and its implications, the impact of mining on ecology, debt distress, port infrastructure and reactions from Africa. The discussion of these areas crystallizes China's interfering proclivity under the banner of development as Africa expresses urgency for it and the repercussions of the profit-driven pursuits of the former on the latter and the geo-political churn the geo-economic enterprise unleashes in the region.

THE BELT AND ROAD INITIATIVE

The BRI (Belt and Road Initiative) as a Chinese government global infrastructure development framework started in 2013 with a comprehensive investment plan extended to 70 countries. It was earlier known as OBOR (One Belt One Road). The BRI constitutes the nucleus of Chinese foreign policy under President Xi Jinping. The BRI flagship project taken up by China in Africa includes railway, port and road construction, energy projects, power stations, telecommunication networks, defense, etc. Xi Jinping's craftsmanship triggered global connectivity and expanded Chinese outreach. It is an investment and infrastructure-building tool (Herbert 2021). The inclusion of Africa into the BRI was formalized in 2013 to transform the African economy and infrastructure. China gave dreams to Africa to revive the fading and decaying infrastructural leftovers from its colonial antiquity.

The Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC), organized in Beijing in the year 2018, witnessed the participation of 55 countries from Africa. The Beijing Summit issued a declaration highlighting stronger China-Africa ties, comprehensive development, working towards a shared future, security, happiness, and common cultural prosperity with "cohesiveness, vitality and creativity" (FOCAC Summit 2018). A promise was given for comprehensive and enduring development in Africa. President Xi Jinping emphasized China's commitment to "adhere to the principle of sincerity, real results, affinity, and good faith, and uphold the values of friendship, justice, and shared interests" (FOCAC Summit 2018). He announced a \$60 billion package for Africa. Eight major initiatives were undertaken to kick-start growth in Africa as part of the China-Africa Cooperation - "industrial connection, infrastructure connectivity, trade facilitation, green development, capacity building, health care, people-to-people exchanges, and peace and

security" (Tiezzi 2018). The list seems quite lengthy. Boosting agricultural productivity, increasing employability through the revitalization of vocational training, and governmental scholarships and exchange programs could be added to the list.

The FOCAC in 2018 witnessed the real flair of Chinese engagement in Africa and embodied the symptoms of success that BRI could procure for China. Looking back into history, the FOCAC was established in 2000 to promote China-Africa economic cooperation through infrastructural development. This initiative was originally designed to map African reality and develop a policy framework to address the infrastructural deficits of Africa and the effective utilization of its resources. Furthermore, the introduction of BRI in 2013 and its subsequent expansion into Africa was a major initiative emanating from understanding African aspirations through FOCAC. FOCAC provided an organizational framework to facilitate BRI in the African theatre. Be that as it may, the 'win-win' cooperation, the major highlight of the FOCAC in 2018, and China's declarative niceties of inclusive Sino-African advancement are supposedly the manifest reality exteriorized to synthetic image-crafting. Knowing China's intent in its Africa journey, the BRI has much more in it beyond its projected reality. The success of BRI lies in its promise and advertisement of low-interest Chinese loans. Africa and many developing nations have fallen for it but could never rise once they got into it. Therefore, the case of much-hyped Beijing's role in Africa as a catalyst of transformation is also juxtaposed with a narrative of the debilitating effects of debt and the painful loss of autonomy, biodiversity, and natural resources.

BILATERAL TRADE

The China-Africa bilateral trade offers the narrative of success. African nations under BRI are perceived to have benefited significantly from this bilateralism. In 2018, China's trade volume in Africa was \$185 billion, and it reached \$192 billion in 2019 (John Hopkins China-Africa Research Initiative 2021). Angola, South Africa, and The Republic of Congo have become the largest exporters to China, whereas Nigeria, South Africa, and Egypt remain the prominent buyers of Chinese goods. The following chart (SAIS-CARI 2021) offers the China -Africa export-import trade trajectory from 2002 to 2019:

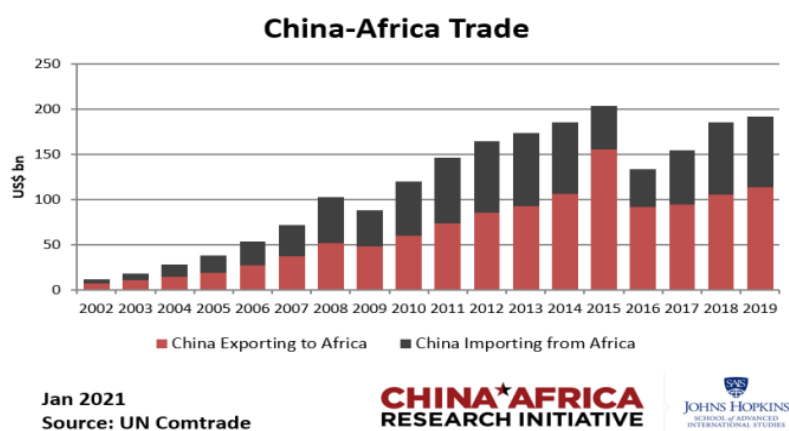


Figure 1: China-Africa Trade
(Source: John Hopkins (SAIS-CARI) - Boston University Global Development Policy Center 2021)

SAIS-CARI (China-Africa Research Initiative at John Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies) presents an estimate that Beijing signed 1141 loan commitments worth US\$ 153 billion between 2000 and 2019 with African countries. The following diagram presents the China-Africa loan commitments (SAIS-CARI 2021). The volume of the loan given to Africa from 2000 to 2019 is given below (SAIS-CARI 2021):

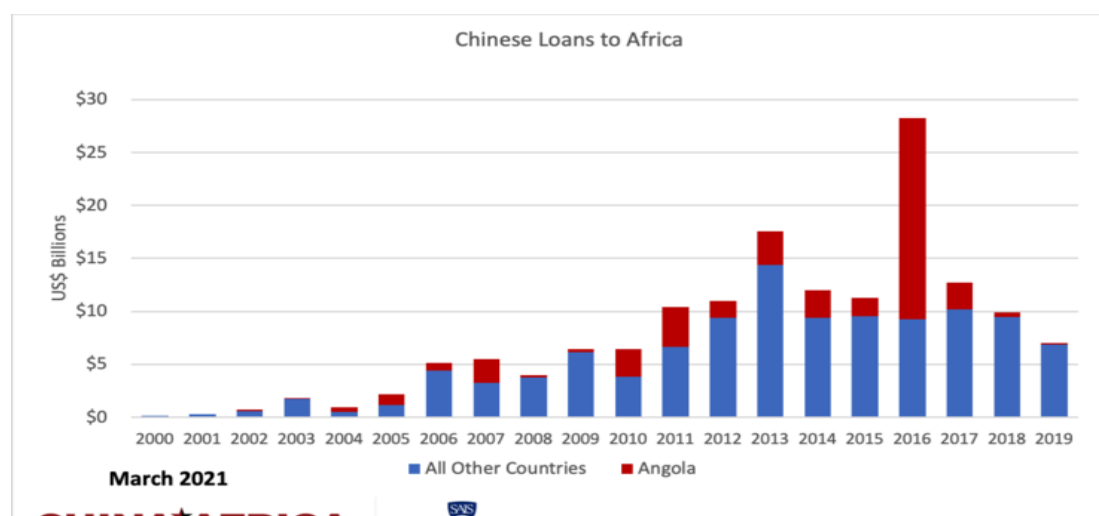


Figure 2: Chinese Loans to Africa

(Source: John Hopkins (SAIS-CARI) – Boston University Global Development Policy Center 2021)

The volume of the loan given to Africa from 2000 to 2019 is given below (SAIS-CARI 2021):

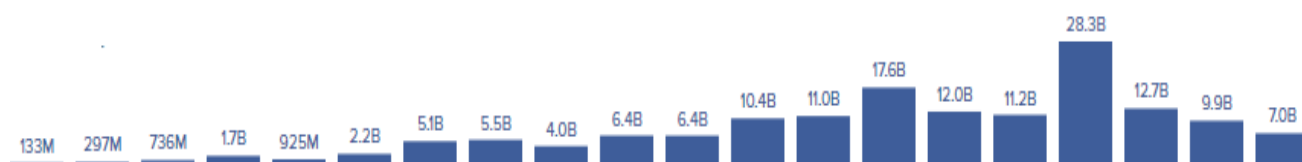


Figure 3: China's volume Loan given to Africa from 2000 to 2019

(Source: John Hopkins (SAIS-CARI) – Boston University Global Development Policy Center 2021)

The loan volume given to Africa began gaining acceleration from 2006 onwards. In 2013 and 2016, Africa received \$17.6 billion and \$28.3 billion loans, respectively. In the year 2016, the loan volume reached a record high. The areas, along with the volume of investment made by China between 2000 and 2019, are depicted in Figure 4. China's primary investment sectors include transport, power, and mining.

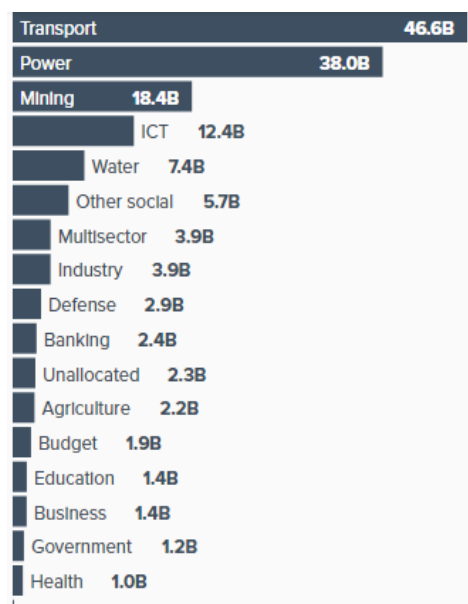


Figure 4: Investments made by China in Africa between 2000 and 2019
(Source: John Hopkins (SAIS-CARI) – Boston University Global Development Policy Center 2021)

However, the question arises, why does China express its over-enthusiasm with Africa? What is China's real intent? The Chinese money coming in grants and interest-free loans coincides with heavy terms and conditions and stringent legalities. The obscurity surrounding the loan parameters is a major issue that raises serious concerns among the African think-tank. Therefore, there is some ulterior motive behind China's enthusiastic investment in Africa and its 'win-win' narrative.

China is seemingly a late-comer in Africa in comparison to its western competitors. In 2011, China's investment share in Africa was 3.2% out of the total stock of investment of \$629 billion involving multiple investors made under various Foreign Direct Investments (FDIs) (Chen *et al.* 2018). By the end of 2013, China's Overseas Direct Investment (ODI) reached \$26 billion compared to the USA's investment of \$22 billion in the same year. China is no longer a small player in Africa. China's high-profile deals in Africa include Sicomines iron mines in the Democratic Republic of Congo, CNPC's gas investment in Mozambique, China's mining investment in Guinea, Sinopec's oil and gas acquisition in Angola, and military base in Djibouti, etc. The prime destinations for its ODI in Africa are Nigeria, South Africa, Zambia, Ethiopia, and Egypt. Nigeria takes the lead. It represents 12% of the deal (Chen *et al.* 2018).

Beijing concentrates its attention primarily on the East and South Africa. It intends to emerge as a big player in the Indian Ocean region from the geo-economic and geostrategic perspectives. Its major attention seems to be on East Africa. It offers China the necessary access to the Red Sea area and its long-term ambition of connecting itself to the Mediterranean Sea through Eritrea, Sudan, and Egypt. China manifests that ambition by amplifying its presence in Djibouti.

Moreover, in Central and West Africa, the Chinese dominance seems to be relatively low, except in Nigeria. China's control over East Africa, such as Ethiopia, Tanzania, and Kenya, is

essentially for geostrategic reasons, not in terms of rich natural deposits compared to the rich Southern African countries such as Angola, South Africa, and Zambia.

However, in East Africa, China invests in the port and military infrastructures to rebuild its signature maritime silk route. The number of Chinese firms operating in Africa is 1597 (China's Ministry of Commerce Transaction-level ODI Data, taken from Chen *et al.* 2018), while Nigeria tops the list. The intensification of Chinese investment corroborates the increase of Chinese firms and workforce. Therefore, speculation is extremely rife that Nigeria is much to lose as it has opened up everything for Chinese intervention.

PORT INFRASTRUCTURE

China's investment profile prioritizes port infrastructure as it promises rich dividends. It chooses those African nations along the coastlines primarily. Out of 49 countries China has signed MOUs with, 34 of them, constituting 70 percent, are found to be the countries sharing coastal areas (Venkateswaran 2020). The ports built by China in Africa are Djibouti Port (Djibouti), Port Sudan (Sudan), Port Said-Port Tewfik (Egypt), Port Ain Sokhna (Egypt), Zarzis Port (Tunisia), and El Hamdania Port (Algeria). They serve China's expansionist ambition and meet its dual purpose – maritime trade and military. The oil refineries in Sudan are well connected to Port Sudan and Dakar Port. The petrochemical and phosphate transformation industries in Tunisia are connected to Zarzis port. Better connectivity has reached the Santa Clara port from Belinga Iron Ore (Venkateswaran 2020).

These trade networks have been created to facilitate the import-export processes. The African railway projects are designed in such a manner to enhance connectivity with the ports. However, the question arises here about how the African nations will benefit from these infrastructural developments and connectivity facilitation. The narrative of growth in Africa seems to be not even satisfactory. The BRI benefits China the most, as expected.

Nevertheless, Africa gives itself away to China and gets nothing substantive. The industry and energy projects undertaken by Beijing almost deplete African natural resources. Even after trading its natural deposits and resources, Africa does not seem to be rising above its debt pressure. Something seems fatally wrong. That invites attention to China's intentionality in opening the floodgates of investment in Africa. Much needs to be brought to the light of the day in connection with China's investment procedures and the asymmetry between the Chinese promise and its execution. The railroad and connectivity and port infrastructures are built to extend China's proximity to the areas where resources are available. China does not just essentially confine itself to the proliferation of its market and flushing out its surplus. Its eye on the import of African resources cannot be ignored.

Tanzanian President John Mugafuli, for instance, calls the Chinese BRI project towards constructing Bagamoyo port "exploitative and awkward" (Chaudhury 2019). The agreement Tanzania went ahead with was that of 99 years of Chinese control over the port on account of its investment in the construction of the port. Unfortunately, the agreement does not authorize Tanzania to exercise its power to determine the nature of investment happening in and through the port and the agents who invest there. These are the tough conditions China includes as part of the BRI agreements. Moreover, Beijing ensures that no other ports are built 'from Tanga to

Mtwara South'. Therefore, Beijing's coordinated attention to building port infrastructure enriches connectivity in Africa and inheres to the dragon's aspiration of extending its claim over the African resources.

THE IMPACT OF MINING ON ECOLOGY

To have access to the resources requires deep mining. Application of the advanced and cutting-edge technology to facilitate quick access to the resources buried deep in the earth causes irrecoverable injury to the ecology. It is roughly estimated that Africa possesses 30% of the world's rare soil. China conducts mining activities to unearth those rare metals having high value in the international market, making minimal investment and obtaining high profit. This kind of mining intervention causes massive damage to the environment regarding radioactive sludge running off into the water supply (NBR 2019). The poor post-processing mining activities exacerbate the ecological safety of the mining areas. Those rare metals include neodymium and praseodymium, used in electric car batteries (NBR 2019). These are critical materials needed for the production of batteries. China's interest in Angola and South Africa is to procure these rare soils, which have acquired dramatic significance in the international market. Battery production has gone exponentially high in recent years. Global attention seems to be moving towards finding alternatives to the fossil fuel dependencies. China understands the mood of the market and works towards dominating it. Africa provides these resources to China to thrive in the global market.

Consequently, Africa's rapid and extensive mining activities, undertaken to generate high revenue and fodder for the new market without paying heed to the sustainability factor, push Africa to the brink of an ecological crisis. The development, which Africa aspires through Beijing or a host of other investors by progressively handicapping its natural endowments by applying heavy technology, is, on the contrary retrogressive from an ecological standpoint. Generating revenue by exploiting the natural resources without considering the renewability aspect is a recipe for a greater calamity. Therefore, Africa's escape from one calamity (economy) is to arrive at another (ecology).

The Mombasa-Nairobi SGR project in Kenya was planned to tear through Nairobi National Park. This irked the citizens as they found that no restraint was exercised to safeguard the landscape and wildlife in Nairobi under the pretext of development. For cost-minimization and convenience of connectivity, other considerations such as landscape protection and wildlife security were ignored. The coal power plant in Lamu Island did not receive public approval as they found it might involve a serious ecological crisis. The protestors in Cameroon complained against the demolition drive towards the construction of the Kribi Deep Sea port. They protested against the lack of employment opportunities for the people. In Chad, the residents expressed their disappointment over Chinese control of the job market, poor wage, and inhospitable workplace. In Ghana, the Chinese have percolated into its fishing industry. The environmental compliances in coal mines in Zambia are flouted by Chinese companies leading to the cancellation of the license of that company by the Zambian government in 2018. China's BRI proposal of the construction of an oil pipeline between Uganda and Tanzania stretching almost 1445 km to fetch crude oil to the port of Tanga in Tanzania received a severe objection from the

environmentalists as they could anticipate risk to the environment and the wildlife and the communities living along that line (Chaudhury 2021).

Moreover, China extends its trade network in Africa as Chinese surplus and overproduction are too much to be consumed within the country. Chinese promotion of infrastructure programs in Africa transfers the volume of extra production. China used around 6.4 gigatons of cement between 2011 and 2013 (Swanson 2015). It used cement in a disproportionately large quantity to boost its urbanization project and to accelerate the construction projects under BRI. This explosive productivity in cement, steel, aluminum, shipbuilding, etc., is undertaken to outsmart the USA, its global competitor, giving the least attention to their quality and completely heedless to their ecological impact. Ana Swanson (2015) anticipates the hazard to ecology in China's madness for over-production: "The waste that occurs with too much top-down economic planning and the environmental toll of growth at all costs. China's cement splurge is impressive, but it may hold the seeds of a more ominous story". The Chinese overproduction has made Africa a significant recipient of quality-compromised products. Being the unequal partner, Africa's compulsion to receive makes China funnel into Africa whatever it thinks fit without giving due attention to the ecological hazards those products may cause. BRI helps Beijing to distribute its over-production successfully. The ecology of Africa, in the process, gets the hit. Beijing seems least worried about the eventualities those sub-standard products inflict on African sensitive ecology.

To move further, with the rise of China's middle class, there emerged a strange demand for possessing ivory jewelry and carvings. The social prestige associated with the possession of ivory was the impetus behind the boom in the ivory trade between Africa and China. More than 20,000 elephants are killed every year to meet China's demand (WWF 2019). The poaching epidemic that was unleashed reduced the elephant population in Africa. Beijing's ban on the ivory trade on 31 December 2017 seems to have given the necessary breathing space to the killing spree. Africa's biodiversity seems to be in grave danger owing to China's bizarre demand for ivory, pangolin, and other endangered species. Africa under the Chinese debt burden remains a witness to the incremental degradation of its rich biodiversity.

THE DEBT DISTRESS

Debt distress relates to stress emanating from the non-payment of a loan taken. In the African context, China pays the loan; and in the event of non-payment, the debt trap becomes seemingly frightening. It is not a secret that China has been accused of throwing 'debt traps' in offering loans to developing nations to boost infrastructures and strengthen their economy. This is termed China's 'debt trap diplomacy' and its neocolonial aspiration in Africa (Tiezzi 2018). On her visit to Africa during the Obama administration, Hillary Clinton cautioned the African nations: "beware of new colonialism of China" (Reuters 2011). There is a growing asymmetry between loans disproportionately given and poor payback capacity. This seems to have been done to burden the African nations with debt so that the Chinese factor is brought into the determinacy of policy decisions there.

China offers interest-free loans to African nations as the latter urgently needs them to develop their economy and provide the essentials to their fast-growing population. The debt

diplomacy that China intends to play in Africa involves a greater deal of obscurity. It is murky and not transparent. The lending banks in China, such as the China Development Bank and the China Exim Bank, hardly disclose the lending terms and conditions (Carmody *et al.* 2021). The distinction between an interest-free loan and commercial rates is not crystallized properly. There are enough gaps and indeterminacies involved in Chinese financial deals. It raises both doubt and confusion. The repercussions of such messy financial commitments and contracts may be fatal for the borrowing nations precipitating 'debt distress' (Carmody *et al.* 2021).

To give some concrete examples, the BRI project in Kenya for the 485-kilometer-long railroad project towards the construction of the Mombasa-Nairobi Standard Gauge Railway (SGR) cost around \$3.6 billion; it was funded by China Exim Bank (Carmody *et al.* 2021). The project was a failure contrary to the Kenyan government's optimistic anticipation of greater profit from it. The cost of transportation from Mombasa to Nairobi by road was found to be cheaper in comparison to the transportation by SGR. The huge debt from China for Kenya's SGR project under BRI did not make any difference in increasing Kenya's GDP or facilitating an economic boom. It led Kenya to China's trap. China gets the much-needed latitude to exercise its full presence in Kenya as the latter fails to address payment compliances against the loan.

Djibouti's debt service ratio was shockingly high in 2017, reaching 57.8% (World Bank in Carmody *et al.* 2021). Its geostrategic significance attracts China's attention. Beijing intensifies its investment there in order to develop the Ghoubet salt port, the Damerjog livestock export port, the Addis-Djibouti Railway, Djibouti-Ethiopia Water Pipeline, and the Doraleh Container Terminal/Multipurpose and Djibouti Port as the terminal of the Ethiopia-Djibouti Railway (Carmody *et al.* 2021). Djibouti is necessary for China's ambition to expand its trade tentacles in the Red Sea region. Therefore, it significantly steers its allocation to augment port infrastructures and their capacity expansion to secure a strong military and trade foundation and mercantile mastery. This aspiration received a concrete shape in 2017 when Beijing established a naval base in Djibouti. It confirms China's propensity to involve itself in African security and military matter:

Djibouti's PLA outpost has a role in securing China's Maritime Silk Road, particularly in the Indian Ocean and the Red Sea, halfway between East Asia and Europe. This role goes far beyond anti-piracy operations and is also part of a strategy to increase China's naval presence in the Indian Ocean (Cabestan 2020, 740).

Looking into the debt trajectory in Djibouti, IMF (2017, 7) report suggests:

Djibouti remains at a high risk of debt distress (...) solvency, and liquidity risks are significant over the projection horizon, and all the debt burden indicators breach their respective policy-dependent thresholds by sizeable margins (...) All the solvency debt burden indicators exhibit protracted breaches of their respective thresholds. In addition, liquidity risks have increased significantly compared with (...) 2015 (Carmody *et al.* 2021).

A small rent-based economy like Djibouti fails to bear the overwhelming debt burden coming from one single source. Its economy gets weaker as it is asymmetrically distributed. Its income goes straight away to debt repayment, and as a result, social spending hardly receives

adequate attention. It hardly has sufficient assets to get over the debt burden. As a result, it risks being liquidated for failing to make timely remittance compliances. If this happens, China will succeed in interfering with Djibouti's autonomy and achieves its objective of emerging as a neo-colonial force in Africa.

This is how China spreads the debt trap under BRI, claiming development in Africa as its main priority. China's cunning resurfaces as the reality in Africa under Chinese tutelage is extremely dire. Now African nations are running after the Beijing administration to extend the repayment duration. The recent pandemic in the form of Covid-19 has also ruined African debt-paying capacity. Africa finds itself in greater distress. Its development aspirations place it in the debt grind: "As of 2020, the countries in Africa with the largest Chinese debt are Angola (US\$25 billion), Ethiopia (US\$13.5 billion), Zambia (US\$7.4 billion), the Republic of Congo (US\$7.3 billion), and Sudan (US\$6.4 billion)" (Broadman2020). If this is the emerging reality that Africa gets increasingly aware of, reactions from the continent are likely to be seen.

THE REACTIONS FROM AFRICA

The Africans have started understanding China's ambition. The BRI projects have not been very successful from the point of view of development in Africa as they are thought to be initially. Some African nations have expressed their anger over the crafty Chinese operation in Africa. In Nigeria, protests erupted due to the non-payment of compensation to the displaced people for the Lagos-Ibadan Railway line in 2017. Abuja in Nigeria seems to be on the brink of losing its sovereignty to China over the unusual pressure that comes from Chinese debt (BW 2021). Nigeria is writhing under pain of repayment of \$400 million to China. The loan was taken to build the Nigerian National Information and Communication Technology Infrastructure Backbone. The project was signed in the year 2018. Due to lack of loan repayment, there arise apprehensions that Nigeria may give itself away to China or lose its autonomy. China exercises its neo-colonial ambitions by making such huge investments in African nations, and by doing so, it spreads its traps to make them come under its grip. The current China-Africa trajectory suggests that it may not be too far in time before China may ask for collateral to repay the loan. It is quite typical of the lenders who freeze the borrowers' assets if the latter fails to make repayment. China may freeze Nigerian assets, for instance, oil fields, etc., as collateral, though it has denied such speculations. Nevertheless, speculation in this direction is gathering strength.

Seeing such development taking place or yet to occur, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) urges Nigeria not to fall for Chinese interest-free loans and its promise of modernization through industry, port, road, railroad infrastructures, and other critical infrastructures (RFI 2019). Nigeria gave away 50% of its revenue collected from its oil resources on loan repayment in 2018. Nigeria's growth story, therefore, becomes quite dismal. The debt taken from China ruins its growth: "Business Hallmark adds a frightful dimension to the debt controversy. If the amount is divided by the country's 198 million population, then each Nigerian owes China 15000 Naira" (RFI 2019).

The local traders in Uganda expressed their angst over the intrusion of Chinese traders into their localities as their business ventures suffered losses in the presence of smart foreign competitors. The protests in Tanzania led to the suspension of the Bagamoyo port project. The

Chinese mining activities in Madagascar and the demolition processes undertaken by Jiuxing Mines caused unrest there. China's investment in the blue economy in African waters raises serious concerns and alarm among the communities who traditionally depended on the sea for their livelihood.

The large number of Chinese people settling in Africa owing to the robust BRI projects generates apprehension among the Africans. The number of Chinese living in Africa is between a million or two (Hairong 2020). The number that is given here is not static or saturated. It is just an assumption, and the process of migration is dynamic. The apprehension that the Africans have are based on the creation of pockets of Chineseness or the "enclosures of Chineseness" (Hodzi 2019). These places appear distinctly Chinese as they were crowded with Chinese restaurants, shopping malls, etc. Mandarin seems to have been exceedingly used there. Obert Hodzi (2019) writes: "Exclusive Chinese restaurants, China towns, and Chinese shopping centers in Harare, Johannesburg, and Accra are emerging as places that resemble the Chinese migrants' attempt to establish their own identity as the Chinese islands in Africa" (p. 4).

China's textile imperialism and flooding of cheap textile products in Africa severely affect the African local textile production. The local textile production fails to compete with the cheap Chinese textile available there. The textile industry in Nigeria experienced significant growth in the 1970s and 80s, but its decline began when Beijing began exporting its cheap textiles to Nigeria. By 2008, almost 160 textile factories in Nigeria were closed down, and it was a severe blow to the Nigerian textile economy (Muhammad *et al.* 2017). This led to the rise of unemployment in Nigeria and increasing unrest and reaction from the Nigerians.

China has emerged as a major player in recent years in terms of the global arms trade. Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) (2020) suggests that "China is the second-largest arms producer in the world, behind the United States but ahead of Russia". Between 2010 and 2020, Africa received almost 19.1% (3.2 billion TIV) of China's total arms export (China Power 2021).

Chinese Arms Exports to Africa (2010-2020)

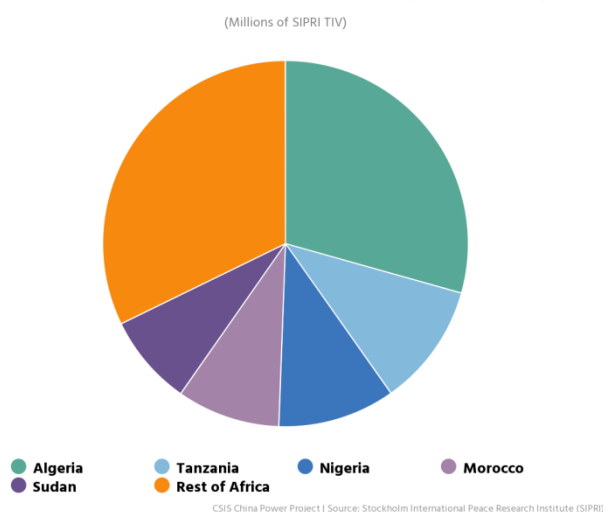


Figure 5: Chinese Arms Export to Africa (2010-2020) (Source: CSIS China Power Project |Source: Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) 2020)

The volume of arms Algeria, Tanzania, Nigeria, Morocco, Sudan, and the rest of Africa got from China over the last decade are of 29.4% (928 million TIV), 10.9% (343 million TIV), 10.4% (328 million TIV), 9.1% (289 million TIV), 8.1% (255 million TIV) and 32.2% (1,018 million TIV) respectively (China Power 2021). The following pie chart (SIPRI 2020) explains China's arms export to Africa between 2010 and 2020.

Caught in the whirlpool of chronic conflict, civil war, ethnic rivalry, and terrorism, Africa provides China with a needy market for its arms supply. Beijing's engagement with Africa seems ironically very comprehensive. It leaves no sector unattempted to flush its products - hard and soft - to Africa. China understands Africa's insecurities, fault-lines, and needs and cunningly caters to those areas. Knowing the sensitivity of ethnic conflict across the nations in Africa and the violent turn those conflicts lead to, Beijing's arms supply to Africa makes the issue all the more complex. Therefore, reactions from sensible Africans are mounting and simultaneously raising awareness against the purchase of arms, complicating the scope of achieving ethnic harmony. When the pain of poverty is too excruciating to bear, the fact of buying arms is a mockery of poverty and an act of serious myopia.

On top of it, the Covid-19 pandemic and Russia's aggression against Ukraine taking the shape of a war that put the world under a nightmarish grip has sad stories in store for Africa. The Covid-19-induced inflation and the inflation related to the impending energy crisis due to the sanctions imposed on Russia for its preference for war in Ukraine will hurt Africa's fragile economy. Moreover, the economy of developing nations is in shambles. A series of lockdowns to prevent the infection of Covid-19 have put all business ventures and normal daily activities at a standstill. Africa's economy is extremely fragile under the burdens of debt taken from the World Bank, IMF, and China. It is to see how the creditors, primarily China, extend the moratorium period. The coronavirus crisis exacerbates the low-income countries in Africa. The vaccination drive seems to be pathetically poor. Africa may take a longer time to recover from the current corona crisis. However, the pressure of debt repayment seems to be mounting higher. There is skepticism about whether China innovates measures to offer debt relief as it holds 27% of Africa's 2021 debt payments (Anker *et al.* 2021). Research at the John Hopkins SAIS China Africa Research Initiative (CARI) suggests that China is restructuring the debt repayment modalities to ease the burden on African countries because of the current pandemic. Nevertheless, the clauses and conditions of such restructuring towards debt relief are to be looked into and how much it benefits Africa in real terms, not just official showcasing.

CONCLUSION

To conclude, the paper has discussed China's geo-economic interest in Africa. Chinese BRI has acted effectively in this direction to realize this interest. However, apart from injecting the much-needed infrastructural growth in Africa, BRI has made African nations feel insecure. The BRI-bound African nations have gradually aired their reservations about Beijing's proclivity for meddling. Beijing has not remained confined to the rules of the agreement. It has gone beyond the permissible limits of interference. The enthusiasm of Africa over the Chinese BRI project and low-interest loans have not induced desired growth as expected. Beijing's participation in the economic space of Africa has seemingly not given the required impetus to the African economy.

This study finds that the Chinese debt diplomacy has inflicted a serious blow to the African aspiration and the dream of a new Africa. Beijing is not addressing rejuvenating or modernizing Africa in the true sense through infrastructure and investment. It largely focuses on defining its authoritative role through debt diplomacy and expanding its coverage over the resources.

Furthermore, this study has shown that the Chinese developmental initiative neglected the required sensitivity toward ecology and African rich biodiversity. The debt stress experienced by the countries for not making timely repayment and the doubling-up effect of the loan taken with the steady addition of interest adversely impact their growth trajectory. There is no doubt that China, with its cutting-edge technology, has given infrastructure-weak Africa the strength to access its rich natural endowments. However, it seems, paradoxically, China has prioritized its geo-economic interest over the progress and success of African nations. The Chinese infrastructures in Africa secure its interest and seemingly neglect the latter's interest. To achieve its geo-economic aspiration, Beijing's arms export to Africa, in a sense, ruins the peace of Africa and indirectly adds to the intensification of ethnic conflict. However, it does not seriously intend it. These findings are important from the perspective of expanding socio-political and economic awareness against Beijing's interfering proclivities and profit-driven motives. The reactions from Africa have already started against these tendencies.

Moreover, the indication of this kind will certainly have some bearing on Beijing's policy formalism towards Africa. It is observed that China employs a host of methods, very subtle and secret, to amplify its interest in Africa. China's expansionist ambition may enable it to "write the rules of the next stage of globalization" (Mourdoukoutas 2019). The study addresses Beijing's monopoly in Africa in economic cooperation, progress, mutual growth, and shared future. It suggests the need for an effective reaction towards achieving a possible balance of interest. However, China's technological know-how is Africa's need, but a balance of interest is desired.

COMPLIANCE WITH ETHICAL STANDARDS

Acknowledgments:

Not applicable.

Funding:

Not applicable.

Statement of human rights:

This article does not contain any studies with human participants performed by any authors.

Statement on the welfare of animals:

This article does not contain any studies with animals performed by any authors.

Informed consent:

Not applicable.

REFERENCES

1. Acker, K., Brautigam, D., and Y Huang. 2021. "The Pandemic Has Worsened Africa's Debt Crisis. China and Other Countries Are Stepping in". *The Washington Post*, 26 February. Accessed 10 June 2021. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2021/02/26/pandemic-has-worsened-africas-debt-crisis-china-other-countries-are-stepping-in/>
2. Allison, Graham. 2017. *Destined for War: Can America and China Escape Thucydides' Trap?* New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.
3. Broadman, Harry G. 2020. "Africa's Governing Elite Share the Blame for China's 'Belt, Road' Debt Crisis". *Forbes*, 31 October. Accessed 11 June 2021. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/harrybroadman/2020/10/31/africas-governing-elite-share-the-blame-for-chinas-belt-road-debt-crisis/?sh=32f6fe4f783c>.
4. BW. 2021. "Nigeria in Turmoil over China's Debt-Trap Diplomacy". Accessed 10 June 2021. <http://www.businessworld.in/article/Nigeria-in-turmoil-over-China-s-debt-trap-diplomacy/16-08-2020-309372/>
5. Cabestan, Jean-Pierre. 2020. "China's Military Base in Djibouti: A Microcosm of China's Growing Competition with the United States and New Bipolarity". *Journal of Contemporary China* 29:125, 731-747. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10670564.2019.1704994>.
6. Carmody, Pdraig., Ian Taylor, and Tim Zajontz. 2021. "China's Spatial Fix and 'Debt Diplomacy' in Africa: Constraining Belt or Road to Economic Transformation?." *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 56:57-77. Accessed June 10, 2021. doi:10.1080/00083968.2020.186801
7. China Power Team. 2021. "How Dominant is China in the Global Arms Trade?". *China Power*, 27 May. Accessed 22 June 2021. <https://chinapower.csis.org/china-global-arms-trade/>.
8. Chaudhury, Dipanjan Roy. 2019. "Tanzania's President Terms China's BRI Port Project Exploitative". *The Economic Times*, 06 July. Accessed 05 May 2021. <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/international/world-news/tanzania-president-terms-bri-port-project-exploitative/articleshow/70109612.cms?from=mdr>.
9. Chaudhury, Dipanjan Roy. 2021. "China's BRI Projects Face Pushback in Africa from Environmentalists and Civil Society Groups". *The Economic Times*, 31 May. Accessed 08 June 2021. <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/international/world-news/chinas-bri-projects-face-pushback-in-africa-from-environmentalists-and-civil-society-groups/articleshow/83109808.cms>
10. Chen, W., Dollar, D., and H, Tang. 2018. "Why Is China Investing in Africa? Evidence from the Firm Level". *The World Bank Economic Review*. 32(3): 610-632. doi: 10.1093/wber/lhw049
11. Coleman, Colin. 2020. "Africa is the Last Frontier for Global Growth". *Project Syndicate*, 04 February. Accessed 19 June 2021. <https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/africa-growth-potential-reforms-by-colin-coleman-2020-02>
12. FOCAC. 2018. "Xi Meets Press as FOCAC Beijing Summit Concludes". Accessed 31 May 2021. <http://focacsummit.mfa.gov.cn/eng/zt/t1591921.htm>

13. Goldstein, Joseph. 2018. "Kenyans Say Chinese Investment Brings Racism and Discrimination". *The New York Times*, 15 October. accessed 08 June 2021. <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/10/15/world/africa/kenya-china-racism.html>
14. Hairong, Yan. 2020. "The Truth about Chinese Migrants in Africa and their Self-segregation". *Quartz Africa*, 05 June. Accessed 21 June 2021. <https://qz.com/africa/1865111/chinese-migrant-workers-in-africa-and-myths-of-self-segregation>
15. Herbert, Natalie. 2021. "China's Belt and Road Initiative Invests in African Infrastructure – and African Military and Police Forces". *The Washington Post*, 30 April. Accessed 15 May 2021. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2021/04/30/chinas-belt-road-initiative-invests-african-infrastructure-african-military-police-forces/>.
16. Hodzi, Obert. 2019. "Chinese in Africa: 'Chineseness' and the Complexities of Identities". *Asian Ethnicity*, 20:1-7. doi: 10.1080/14631369.2018.1539826.
17. IMF. 2017. "Djibouti Staff Report for the 2016 Article IV Consultation—Debt Sustainability Analysis". Washington DC: International Monetary Fund.
18. Lokanathan, V. 2020. "China's Belt and Road Initiative: Implications in Africa". *ORF Issue Brief No. 395*, August 2020, Observer Research Foundation. Accessed 08 June 2021. <https://www.orfonline.org/research/chinas-belt-and-road-initiative-implications-in-africa/>
19. Mourdoukoutas, P. 2019. "What China Wants from Africa? Everything". *Forbes*, 04 May. accessed 11 June 2021. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/panosmourdoukoutas/2019/05/04/what-china-wants-from-africa-everything/?sh=4af0c746758b>.
20. Muhammad, Murtala., Mansur Ibrahim Mukhtar, and Gold Kafilah Lola. 2017. "The Impact of Chinese Textile Imperialism on Nigeria's Textile Industry and Trade: 1960–2015." *Review of African Political Economy*, 44: 673-682. Accessed June 11, 2021. doi: 10.1080/03056244.2017.1313729
21. NBR. 2019. "China's Control of Rare Earth Metals". Accessed 11 June, 2021. <https://www.nbr.org/publication/chinas-control-of-rare-earth-metals/>.
22. RFI. 2019. "Focus on Africa: IMF Warns Nigeria about Chinese Debt". Accessed 10 June 2021. <https://www.rfi.fr/en/africa/20190411-focus-africa-imf-warns-nigeria-about-mountain-chinese-debt>
23. Reuters. 2011. "Clinton Warns against "New Colonialism" in Africa". Accessed 11 June 2021. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-clinton-africa-idUSTRE75A0RI20110611>
24. SAIS-CARI. 2021. "Loan Data". Accessed 21 June, 2021. <http://www.sais-cari.org/data>
25. Shepard, Wade. 2019. "What China is Really up to in Africa". *Forbes*, 03 October. Accessed 09 June, 2021. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/wadeshepard/2019/10/03/what-china-is-really-up-to-in-africa/?sh=69545e8b5930>
26. SIPRI. 2020. "New SIPRI Data Reveals Scale of Chinese Arms Industry". Accessed 21 June 2021. <https://www.sipri.org/media/press-release/2020/new-sipri-data-reveals-scale-chinese-arms-industry>
27. Swanson, Ana. 2015. "How China Used More Cement in 3 Years than the US Did in the Entire 20th Century". *The Washington Post*, 24 March. Accessed 01 April 2021.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2015/03/24/how-china-used-more-cement-in-3-years-than-the-u-s-did-in-the-entire-20th-century/>

28. Tiezzi, Shannon. 2018. "FOCAC 2018: Rebranding China in Africa". *The Diplomat*, 05 September. Accessed 01 April 2021. <https://thediplomat.com/2018/09/focac-2018-rebranding-china-in-africa/>.
29. Venkateswaran, L. 2020. "China's Belt and Road Initiative: Implications in Africa," *ORF Issue Brief No. 395*, 24 August. Accessed 10 April 2021. <https://www.orfonline.org/research/chinas-belt-and-road-initiative-implications-in-africa/>.
30. World Wildlife. 2019. "Two Years After China Bans Elephant Ivory Trade, Demand for Elephant Ivory is Down". Accessed 10 June 2021. <https://www.worldwildlife.org/stories/two-years-after-china-bans-elephant-ivory-trade-demand-for-elephant-ivory-is-down>.

Copyright © 2022 The author/s
This work is licensed under a CC-BY 3.0 license
(* Corresponding author
Peer review method: Double-blind
Received: 20.02.2022
Accepted: 19.03.2022
Published: 14.06.2022
Review article
DOI: <https://www.doi.org/10.47305/JLIA2282240m>

How to cite:

Maurya, Sooraj Kumar. 2022. "ON JUST, JUSTICE AND DISTRIBUTIVE JUSTICE: A CRITICAL AND COMPARATIVE DISCOURSE". Journal of Liberty and International Affairs 8 (2):240-54. <https://e-jlia.com/index.php/jlia/article/view/609>.



ON JUST, JUSTICE AND DISTRIBUTIVE JUSTICE: A CRITICAL AND COMPARATIVE DISCOURSE

Sooraj Kumar Maurya^{1*}

¹Ramanujan College, University of Delhi - New Delhi, India  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6974-5508> ✉ sooraj.au998@gmail.com

Abstract: *Despite being endlessly debated, a unanimous impetus on the nature of just, justice, and distributive justice appears entirely untouched to the desirable scientific certainty so far. Aristotle asserts treating 'equals equally and un-equals unequally' but in proportion to their relevant differences. John Rawls says 'justice as fairness.' To both Aristotle and John Rawls, justice meant for the good and a willingness to act by the laws to ensure the highest good of society. Antecedently, both agree that justice is a master imperative for good human relationships and coexistence. However, despite the universal agreement, they differ in many fundamental respects. Aristotle denies the outbound distribution of an individual's rights as only the head of the family has the right to free speech in the family. But, Rawls distributes each right to the individual level. The paper attempts to discuss the similarities and dissimilarities in Aristotle's and John Rawls' ideas of just, justice and distributive justice. It has been argued that the aim of both philosophers was the same, i.e., to find out a theory of justice through which unity, harmony, virtue, and happiness can be attained to the fullest in a nation.*

Keywords: *Just; Justice; Distributive Justice; Rectificatory Justice; Procedural Justice; Substantive Justice*

INTRODUCTION

The concepts of just, justice, and distributive justice have been the most critical issues from its early history to the present day. The popularity of the democratic system of governance has occupied a significant role in all the possible areas of material and non-material spheres of human lives and actions. Traditionally, just, justice, and distributive justice are often considered to deal with the socio-economic, historical, moral, and political dynamics at the human level of consciousness (Miller 1992). The significant rudiments of such a unitary and one-sided approach are that all the human incidents and affairs are developed and determined by keeping humans at the center of human endeavors. Antecedently, disciplines such as ethics, politics, sociology, economics, psychology, and other subjects were not only developed and designed by the humans but also all possible faculties of mental universes, have been considered merely as means to fulfilling and benefitting wholly and solely for the well-being of humans, out there, at large. The approach, as mentioned above, is commonly known as the anthropocentric or Anthropocene approach to human behaviors in the contemporary branches of studying humanities and social sciences (Brennan and Norva 2021). However, the above-mentioned

anthropocentric approach overpowers other methodological ideologies, such as eco-centrism, cosmo-centrism, and bio-centrism, which do not appeal to think beyond human interest and well-being (Gladvin *et al.* 1995).

Consequently, what is just, justice, and distributive justice, appeared to be the most debated normative terms in ethics and political philosophy due to its mere philosophy of Anthropocene. However, the debate is that just, justice and distributive justice can never be understood by restricting the inquiry to the well-being of humans only. Rather, it should be extended from humans to all other creatures (bios) integral to the cosmos.

Thus, just, justice and distributive justice have appeared to be the most relativistic socio-cultural constructs. Nowadays, concerning these normative terms, it is palpable that there is a wide socio-cultural gap between the mindset and ideology of ancient times and that of modern times. In the old-time, human beings were the prime mover and end-in-itself for making and serving the pertinent values and norms in the separate entity's respective socio-economic, geographical, and historical backgrounds. However, in modern times, it has not only been questionable but also broadly at the edge of denial that human beings are the integrated part of the whole universe or cosmos, but apart from human beings, all other creatures such as animals, plants, and non-living entities are as much significance as the human beings are. That led to inclusive thinking that all the biotic and abiotic entities, along with the human being, are essential and play a decisive role in determining the values and norms of the whole cosmos. The revolutionary transmission that brought into one the existing two distinguishable and the two poles apart approaches and the concept of justice was the deep-rooted cause of the transition. For this reason, to show this transition concretely, in the present research paper, Aristotle's conceptions of just, justice and distributive justice have been picked up from ancient times (Clark and Elliott 2001), and John Rawls's theories of just, justice and distributive justice have been picked up from contemporary times.

JUST: THE MEANING AND NATURE

The term 'just' is widely discussed by various philosophers in varied academic endeavors. Commonly, just refers to a status that is devoid of unfairnesses. However, Aristotle and John Rawls have reflected differently on 'just'. Aristotle has discussed 'just' as synonymous with lawful (Haines 2006). If a systemic process of a nation does work following the law and statutes of the respective nation, the nation is in the state of just-ness, or the nation can be said to be a just nation. This leads to the ideation of a concept of being in the state of lawfulness, which explicitly or implicitly sets forth further validation of human actions and processes and systemic actions and processes directed towards the insurance of quality of life and well-being of individuals living out there. Aristotle has explicitly asserted and used the term 'just' and 'lawful' interchangeably (Haines 2006) as both advocate for a group of policies that are geared towards the development of, increase in the representation of, or upliftment of, or aptitudinal or attitudinal transformations of disadvantaged classes, under-represented classes or left out classes of the nation.

On the other hand, John Rawls uses 'just' as synonymous with 'fairness'. According to John Rawls, the ultimate obligation of government agencies is to find out the best method to

distribute primary and secondary goods among the citizens of the state (Chapman 1975). In making this inquiry, John Rawls gives affiliation to two tentatively innovative capabilities to initiate these two existential ways of doing distribution of primary and secondary goods among the individuals living out there in a nation. The first is 'original position', and the second is 'veil of ignorance'. The original position is a hypothetical state, or it can also be called the conception of a state or nation. In the 'original position', one starts the distribution of rights and liberties among the individuals. However, this process of distributing rights and laws may not be started if it is not filtered through the "veil of ignorance" (Chapman 1975).

Moreover, during the distribution of laws, rights, and basic liberties among individuals, one should be ignorant of own identity. This conceals an individual's own defining identity, such as age, gender, religion, race, etc. The result of both enabled capacities, such as 'original position' and 'veil of ignorance' will lead to the emergence of a palpable state devoid of unfairnesses and injustices. This is why John Rawls advocates using the term 'just' as an equal or replaceable to "fairness" (Chapman 1975).

JUSTICE AND DISTRIBUTIVE JUSTICE

Aristotle's Theory of Justice

It would not be an exaggeration to say Socrates spent his whole life finding out the real meaning of the term justice. Moreover, he concluded that 'justice is nothing, but minding one's own business' (Whitby 1937, 194). Aristotle's theory of justice initiates with the quest: what is the highest good attainable by human efforts or actions? In general, Aristotle believes that all the incidents, affairs, objects, and subjects have something in common: they seek well-analyzed and defined desirable ends. In particular, human beings also have the same phenomenon (Slakever 1981). All people undergo the attainment of well explained and determined practical terms that would increase the amount of good in their life, which differs from one person to another. While discussing Aristotle's philosophy, he says that all human beings should have only one aim. Answering this, he says that an individual's whole life runs roundabout that particular aim that is nothing but the attainment of real happiness (Ross 2009, 5). According to Aristotle, happiness is the highest of all attainable goods, which many human minds may perceive in different ways and manners. Aristotle says this fact in the following manner:

Let us resume our inquiry and state that all knowledge and every pursuit aims at some good, what it is that we say political science aims at and what is the highest of all goods achievable by action. Verbally there is very general agreement; for both the general run of men and people of superior-refinement say that it is happiness and identify living well and faring well with being happy; but concerning what happiness is, they differ, and the many do not give the same account as the wise (Ross 2009, 5).

Aristotle puts forth three different explanations regarding happiness: pleasure, wisdom, and virtue. In Aristotle's view, many individuals think of happiness as pleasure; according to Aristotle, this is an animalistic instinct. At the same time, some people believe happiness is an

honor, which Aristotle calls practical wisdom or political wisdom. Furthermore, the remaining few understand happiness in virtue (Ross 2009, 21). According to Aristotle, the last category of people who think happiness in virtue is the apex of human attainment. It is worth mentioning that often, all the discussed kinds of individuals strive to attain happiness for self-gratification, not for the sake of others. It means pleasure, honor, and virtue, all the three types of happiness, are desired for self-gratification, not for their own sake.

Consequently, it can be said there is sufficiently none who wishes happiness only for other than itself. In this regard, Aristotle ultimately concludes that only virtuous acts are self-sufficient. Furthermore, self-sufficiency solely depends on itself and makes life desirable, lacking nothing.

In 'Nicomachean Ethics', Aristotle distinguishes between two types of justice: general or universal and particular (Ross 2009, 5). However, Aristotle does not comprehensively define the meaning and nature of general or universal justice. He has only used the word general justice in the beginning lines of Book V of his book 'Nicomachean Ethics'. According to Aristotle, 'just' (Ross 2009, 5) has two different meanings. The first meaning of the term 'just' forms the ground for universal or general justice. As expressed by Aristotle, the meaning of the notion 'just' is making a ground for universal justice or general justice, "that a conduct in accordance with the law" (Ross 2009, 81-1130b). In other words, it can be said that general or universal justice means to act lawfully or in a state of lawfulness. Thus, according to Aristotle, there is no categorical differentiation between that just and law (Ross 2009, 81-1129b). From this background, it is apparent that those acts are just and lawful or according to the law, but what is a lawful act. In reply to the question, Aristotle says that the law or lawfulness denotes a certain kind of behavior aimed at promoting the common interest of the whole society (Burns 1998).

Moreover, in this sense, justice means a right configuration that appeals to individuals to do just deeds or actions. Aristotle says that this is called the virtue of the righteousness of moral justice, which is nothing but a virtue directed to benefit others, not for self. Suppose 'just' is veiled as justice in general or general justice. It can be said that universal justice is in the form of the supreme virtue of sticking to and working by law. Aristotle has expressed the incapability of applying universal justice at all times; for this reason, he has given a different kind of justice, i.e., particular justice (Ross 2009, 82-1130a). It was needed where no possibilities were left to follow the general or universal justice frameworks. Aristotle realized that some acts might not agree with the laws, but still, they are useful. That is why Aristotle developed the theory of particular justice.

The second type of justice is particular justice which opts for the second meaning of the term 'just', which stands for equality or exact or fair mean (Ross 2009, 82-1130a). Thus, particular justice upholds the state of fairness and equality. This kind of justice is based on distributing external or commensurable goods in fair proportion. For instance, a just wage is a wage in proportion to the detailed account of the labor done by that laborer. Moreover, the term 'fair' denotes a status between too much and too little. The term 'equal' denotes a status between more and less (Ross 2009, 1133a). Thus, it can be said that a just law is an ideal mean between two extremes, too much and too little or more and less.

The meaning of the term 'just' can formulate a different form as particular justice, which means treating equals equally and unequal unequally with their several conditions.

Interestingly, Aristotle does not discuss much 'general justice'. It was Plato who talked about this kind of justice at length. Nevertheless, he did not say anything about particular justice. Unlike Plato, Aristotle pays attention more to 'particular justice'. Providing an important place to the 'particular justice' is that particular justice is related to the justice of everyday life, such as distribution, exchange, retribution, and voluntary participation of rational individuals in social affairs (Ross 2009, 1132b). While universal justice is a kind of supreme virtue, which is being continued as an ideal that has to be attained by the individuals, practically never attained at all.

Aristotle's philosophy of universal justice is quite interesting to be followed. The ideas such as the rule of law, equality before the law, and lawfulness were worthy of being the mindset of individuals and states from ancient to modern times. It is possible for some thinkers not to agree with this thought. However, the deviation from this was arbitrary and was directed through some morally and legally impermissible policies and laws for nullifying or impairing the effects of equality (Burns 1998). When it comes to particular justice, Aristotle appears to signify the kind of justice as a morally permissible and desirable distribution of commensurable goods, disadvantages, and benefits among ordinary people (Burns 1998). From this discussion, it can be said that particular justice is a system of norms, unlike the commonality of general justice, which is responsible for integrating society as a whole. Consequently, Aristotle has classified justice into two types, namely, distributive justice and rectificatory justice. In his words, "The just as the fair and equal: divided into distributive and rectificatory justice" (Ross 2009, 82-1030a).

The first one is that distributive justice is rested on the rudiments of the thought that everyone should be given his due concerning the contributions to the state. In other words, distributive justice appeals that a just distribution of consumable goods should be done on equal or unequal terms. The concept of distributive justice asserts that treating equals equally and un-equals un-equally implies that an individual's right, duty, and reward should be in proportion to his merit and contribution to the state. Hence, according to this view of justice, both notions of just and proportionate are considered synonymous. It is also an intermediate status between too large and too small or too much and too little (Ross 2009, 85-1131a).

It is mandatory to mention that the distribution is not arbitrary and blindfolded. Agent must consider several particulars, such as what is his or her share in proportion to his or her unequal worth or merit of an individual. According to the visualized ratio, the distribution would take place. This distribution mode takes place according to the geometrical proportion (Ross 2009, 84-1131a). Along with this, sometimes distributions occur in society according to the individual concerned.

The second type of particular justice is commutative, rectificatory, or corrective justice (Ross 2009, 86-1131b). This type of justice is required when one person performs some actions against another in such a manner that the agent gains and the victims suffer. Applying the core idea of this kind of justice is the best way to solve these unequal gains and suffering. There is a dire need to return the agent's morally impermissible benefits and return them to the victims. Hence, equality is restored by punishing the agent and compensating the victims. It is needed to be motioned that restorative justice does not demand or look into the status of an individual in the die course of awarding a penalty or compensation. Instead, it has to be taken into account the nature of the disadvantages caused to victims and the benefits gained by agents (Ross 2009,

86-1133b). Thus, in this process, the individual's status is not considered. For this reason, justice follows the law of arithmetic proportion.

Interestingly, the concept of justice in Aristotle's philosophy also accepts that all the material and non-material structures have the only ultimate goal: the fullest realization and actualization of the real happiness of human beings. For this reason, all the socio-economic and political structures should be molded in the way that they are meant to realize real happiness in their lives. Thus, it can be mentioned that justice is the core idea of Aristotle's philosophy that has the goal of the full-fledged development of society. A just society is a community where all individuals live in harmony with equality and amity.

John Rawls' Theory of Justice

In his book 'A Theory of Justice', John Rawls presents his theory of justice. He offers some of the core ideas related to the theory of justice. Based on these ideas, he establishes his central thesis, i.e., justice as fairness which is nothing but a theory of justice that generalizes and carries to a higher level of abstraction of the traditional conception of social contract or utilitarianism and intuitionism. Moreover, he considers some differences between these views and his justice as fairness (Chapman 1975). So justice is defined through a procedure that claims to be fair. According to Rawls, "justice as fairness" (Rawls 1971, 10).

Furthermore, John Rawls, to formulate his theory of justice, has proposed two pre-requisites that will lead to conceptualizing his normative idea of justice. The first one is the 'veil of ignorance'. In the following way, it can be understood that if men are unknown to their identity or the power to choose or be in what gender or sex they want to be, this would have been in the hands of some higher authority. This will lead to an obvious question about how the distribution of the rights to each gender should be done specifically. Such a gender is given the greater rights' or everyone should get equal rights and liberties to realize self-potential. According to Rawls, in this situation, the rights and laws would be distributed equally among the individuals irrespective of personal characteristics. Reasonably, in the 'veil of ignorance', the distributor knows the basic principles of science, politics, and economics, and the distributor does not know his/her identity, gender, religion, and ethnicity. This hypothetical state of a human being is called an original position, where your consciousness is placed back in time before you are born. You are behind the veil of ignorance where the subject's identity is curtailed in this state. John Rawls means that at that time, you have no idea whether you will be born in wealth or poverty, if you are going to be Chinese or American, black or white, intelligent or not talented or not, etc. John Rawls asserts that the problem is that people would choose principles out of their self-interest. A rich person would not agree to redistribute wealth because he does not want to lose. In this original position, you would support the fundamentals of building a just system. According to Rawls, if you do not know if you will be born with an illness or not, you would surely be in favor of free healthcare. If you do not know if you will be born into poverty or wealth, you would be in favor of free education for all (Chapman 1975).

John Rawls asserts that in the 'original position' in a 'veil of ignorance', any rational person would support the following ideas of justice. There are two kinds of justice. The first is procedural justice, and the second is Substantive Justice. John Rawls' has discussed both types

of justice. According to John Rawls, If a subject 'X' and 'Y' are similar, both the subjects should be treated in the same way. Hence, the underlying notion is that one should treat cases alike. This concept of justice is quite similar to the conception of the common civil code, which is derived from the liberty principle of liberalism.

The ideology of liberalism accepts liberty as its initial value; in any circumstances, the ideology cannot compromise an individual's liberty (Arrow 1973). Hence, the ideology is rested on the concept of the basic notion of possessive individualism. Possessive individualism is a concept according in which all the things an individual attains by using his talent and capability belong to him. None can snatch these things from him; he keeps all the rights to have these assets. Whatever assets are, if gained by using the talent and capability, belong to the individual; otherwise, the individual does not keep any assets. Affirmative action is a means to ensure social justice in society (Cahn 2002). That leads to acting on a policy of preference that advocates moral sacrifices for others' welfare. This notion seems contrary to the fundamental postulates of 'treating as the same'. So, the assertion derived from this obtained thought does not support any preferential hiring policy in any institution. It would be interesting to know that all the followed procedures are undoubtedly fair; that is the only reason this kind of justice is procedural justice. So, justice is defined through a procedure that claims to be fair. From this very underlying assumption of justice, Rawls claims "justice as fairness" (Rawls 1971, 10), which should be understood as the holistic vision of justice (Rawls 1971, 10).

The principles of justice that John Rawls asserts are those that free and rational people would accept in an initial or original position of equality. No one knows his place in the society; his class, rank, or status; his fortune in the distribution of natural assets and ability; his intelligence, strength, the like, or even his conception of the good (Arrow 1973). Thus, men deliberate behind the veil of ignorance and determine their rights and duties. Strictly speaking, there is nothing like a liberal theory of equality. John Rawls exposes the face of liberalism, which acceptance was for the realization of equality of all individuals emphasizing the care of the least privileged. Although, it can be seen that liberals such as Lock, Bentham, and Mill support equality. He argues that the principles of justice are those that free and rational individuals would choose in the veil of ignorance as to their position in the society they might occupy.

Furthermore, Rawls has discussed primary social goods (Arrow 1973). There are things that every rational man is presumed to want, including rights and liberties, opportunities, powers, income, wealth, and basic self-respect. John Rawls has given two principles of justice which are the guiding ideas of justice as fairness:

First: each person is to have an equal right to the most extensive scheme of equal basic liberties compatible with a similar scheme of liberties for others (Rawls 1971, 53).

Second: social and economic inequalities are to be arranged so that they are both (a) reasonably expected to be to everyone's advantage and (b) attached to positions and offices open to all (Rawls 1971, 53).

Or

First principle: Each person has the same inalienable claim to a fully adequate scheme of equal basic liberties, which scheme is compatible with the same scheme of liberties for all.

Second principle: Social and economic inequalities are to satisfy two conditions:

a. They are to be attached to offices and positions open to all under conditions of

fair equality of opportunity;

- b. They are to be to the greatest benefit of the least-advantaged members of society (the difference principle) (Rawls 1971, 54).

The two rules mentioned above are the bedrock of Rawls' theory of justice, through which two forms of equality deal with the elimination of substantial inequalities. Indeed, the first principle of equal fundamental liberties is reflected primarily in the political constitution. Every person has to give the rights and laws that would please him and at the same time worthy of being provided for another one. Moreover, the second principle applies to a different situation where primarily economic inequalities are palpable.

In the dialectical situation among both the principles, the first principle of justice prioritizes the fulfillment of the second principle. Moreover, within the second principle, fair equality of opportunity takes precedence over the "difference principle" (Rawls 1971, 54). In the second section of the second principle, Rawls makes a great pattern of a conception of justice that would improve the chances of the least advantaged members of society. In other words, inequality is only justified when it results in the poor being better off in the social dimension. Rawls calls this the difference principle. The difference principle admits to inequalities to the extent that the well-being of the worst member can be ensured to be maximized (Rawls 1971, 55). Discussing here is interesting that Rawls says that "men agree to share one another's fate" (Maurya 2018).

According to Rawls' conception of justice, the first rule is right in general conditions, but if the situation is critical so that the first rule cannot solve the problem, here comes the second rule. The second rule of justice is nothing but a form of social justice (Arrow 1973). The second rule of Rawls' theory of justice should be accounted as directed to secure the rights for past wrongdoings. The wrongdoings were executed by violating either one of the above principles. Hence, commensurable primary goods have to be compensated for the victims of past injustices as a remedy for the effects of their current under-representation and absenteeism from significant workplaces. Thus, there is an urgent requirement to change current distributional practices to make the left out sections uplifted and elevated to the desirable certainty. It is also needed here to help them in the position to realize the same efforts.

It is clear as a crystal by the above discussion that John Rawls supports the policy of preferential treatments and affirmative action. Still, the fundamentals are different from Utilitarian and Intuitionist. It is not an irrational or insane belief. For instance, Rawls' theory of Affirmative action is not completely derived from the sole factor of intuitionism. It can fairly be understood by Rawls' statement as follows: "A conception of justice cannot be deduced from self-evident premises or conditions on principles; instead, its justification the matter of the mutual support of many considerations of everything fitting together into one coherent view" (Rawls 1971, 19).

Thus, Rawls does not deduce his theory of justice from any self-evident truth, but rather his theory is derived from an individual's belief which is coherent with other individuals in the community. Hence, he has given a more significant role to the community than an individual. Nevertheless, it does not entail that he did not take anything from intuitionism (Arrow 1973).

For instance, utilitarianism is the idea that the moral worth of an action is wholly derived

from the contribution to the overall utility of the activities designed to maximize happiness or pleasure for all. Thus, the individual is essential here, but it should imply the greatest happiness for the most significant number of people. Rawls asserts that utilitarianism ignores the separateness and distinctness of an individual. Hence, he does not identify that justice is a state "what free individual would select to regulate the very social cooperation under fair conditions" (Maurya 2018). Utilitarianism upholds that morality should guide character so that consequence is best for people.

Hence, it can easily be said that John Rawls has taken some very ideas of intuitionism to formulate his ideas of compensatory justice. It is worth mentioning that he did not copy the complete patterns of the same. In the same way, he did with utilitarianism. For instance, John Rawls has accepted Kant's conception of a free and rational being. John Rawls emphasized: "In the original position, the parties assume that they are rational and able to manage their affairs in society. Therefore they do not acknowledge any duties to self, since this is unnecessary to further their good" (Rawls 1971, 218). It denotes that persons are ends in themselves, and maxims of morality have been a critical factor in constantly proving individual as a 'moral autonomy', i.e. 'freedom and liberty'. The thing, which makes a difference in the line, is the characteristic of making the decision coherent with public reason. It proves that Rawls does not follow the backward-looking argument. It is because he agrees to see the actions that proved intrinsically valuable. However, they should not be followed until it is not coherent with the public interest. Further, the forward-looking argument does not fit John Rawls. It is because Rawls never talks, in his writings, about throwing the individual's freedom and liberty to assure the community's interests.

According to Rawls, if action is ensuring the total welfare of the society, i.e., its results are favorable to community welfare, this should not be the only factor to adopt this action in the future also, rather one should see its level of conserving the individuals' freedom and rationality. If the action cares about these factors, it should undoubtedly be followed and implemented in the same community. Hence, each one has to be counted for one and nobody for more than one. The use of a particular kind of justice should not be understood as merely eliminating the inequalities prevailing at significant workplaces. Instead, the government formulates norms or normative theories to ensure the total welfare of the society. This goal appears to be the most desirable goal of a government and a nation. The point shows that establishing standards does not build in one day, but rather it needs an in-depth philosophical debate and investigation. That leads to the different opinions of proponents and opponents.

Furthermore, the government of a nation should create situations in which all the individuals can realize and entertain themselves to the desired end. Only then can society attain a harmonious state. Unlike this, societies are disintegrated into several forms based on different morally impermissible criteria in the contemporary era. All these disintegrations are the unequal and partial distribution of laws and rights in the community. That has created two separate classes in which a type of individual got higher rights and laws than the other one. Thus, the first group is entertained more than they should cheer.

The second group is welcoming fewer laws and rights than they should cheer. These factors create a difference that results in different kinds of imbalances and disparities or injustices. Situations like this can be traced in most societies. To remove the injustice, equality

should be assured. That leads to the emergence of a particular kind of justice like affirmative action. In its ideal form, affirmative actions are those actions in types of some special laws and rights that are done in society to pull the targeted, deprived, or backward class into the mainstream of the community. They have been treated as a differentiated member based on their caste, creed, color, and sex. This differentiation led the class into an underrepresented class in every sector of society. Thus, it is now apparent that affirmative action is a kind of compensatory justice. It will lead to the nation's total welfare, which is the genuine requirement of today's society (Cahn 2002, XII).

A question remains untouched from coverage of the reasonable evaluations that come from many different sides and many different lands. Whether the exercise of impartiality, fairness, and equality should be evaluated with limited frameworks within a culture with shared attitudes and priorities, the approaches to justice presented by Aristotle and John Rawls can be taken into account. For instance, Aristotle's theory of justice takes place in Western classical times, and the other is John Rawls, a great philosopher of modern times.

There is a noticeable gap between these two-mile stones. For instance, Aristotle has given two straits of justice. The first one is universal or general justice and the second one is particular justice. Similarly, John Rawls has given two straits of justice the first principle, which is universally applied to society. Furthermore, the second one is the second principle of justice which is applied to situations where the normative framework of the first principle cannot be followed. Further, both Aristotle and John Rawls' justice meant the goodness and willingness to act by the laws to ensure the highest good of society. Antecedently, both agree that justice is a master imperative for good human relationships and coexistence.

However, along with these similarities in the normative frameworks of justice, many differences are also within. For instance, Aristotle says that all lawful things are just in universal justice. On the other hand, John Rawls' in his first principle that all laws, which are the essential characteristics of liberalism, are just and should be implemented in society. It can be said that Aristotle never specifies himself and the laws, but John Rawls asserts that the laws and rights based on liberalism are the only things that will help ensure the welfare of the individual. Thus, John Rawls's attached to the individuals' well-being more than the public's well-being. Rawls sees the well-being of society in the well-being of the individual.

On the other hand, Aristotle is attached to the societal rights for the community's well-being. For this reason, Aristotle denies the dispersion of equal freedom, equal rights, and fair laws at the individual and family level; because he thinks that the right to equality and liberty at the family level would destroy the family (Nelson 2017, 57). Thus, Aristotle denies the outbound distribution of an individual's rights as only the head of the family has the right to free speech in the family. In this regard, Nelson's assertion is worthy of being explained: "families require strict hierarchical relationships. The husband must rule like a monarch, and the children must obey their parents; we would no longer agree that the husband should 'rule', but the idea of hierarchy and discipline in raising children is still influential" (Nelson 2017, 57).

CONCLUSION

From the above discussion of Aristotle's and John Rawls' theories of justice, it is very interesting to note that both theories have their virtues. Moreover, both philosophers have tried to solve practical problems such as how the allocation and distribution of rights, laws, and primary goods can be done with the help of specific normative theories of justice. Let us look at the socio-economic and historical conditions of the society of Aristotle with that of John Rawls. It can be concluded that there were many graspable socio-cultural differences. Moreover, the internal aspect of society differs from one to another - the same reason applies to Aristotle and John Rawls's theories of justice. For instance, both philosophers have caught the attention of the intellectuals of their own time. However, as for John Rawls, his opportunity and difference principles were the most remarkable principles among all other theories of justice since time immemorial.

Moreover, his liberty principle (the first principle of justice) had also spaced to the egalitarian's concern for individuality. It is commendable that John Rawls' theory of justice is that he emphasized 'Pareto Optimality' or 'Pareto Efficiency' to eliminate purely economic inequalities among individuals. While discussing the nature of inequalities, these are sometimes economic, social, political, psychological, cultural, or many more kinds. This relative nature of societies and desirable theories of justice do not question the universality and objectivity of theories of justice. Rather, there is an extreme urgency to understand the factuality and practicality of the issues in particular situations. And then, we should go for relative solutions, which is known as methodological relativism. That is why the theories of justice of Aristotle and John Rawls both were ethical and conducive to repairing the recurrent socio-economic and historical issues and concerns faced by the individuals of the respective time. The question arises when one starts to evaluate Aristotle's theory with that of modern and contemporary problems of individuals. In this situation, Aristotle might not be that much appropriate to address the current issues.

In the same way, If Rawlsian theory of justice might not be suited to the desirable extent when one starts to disregard the situation in which John Rawls has developed his theory. For instance, a formula of algebra will do justice when we apply it in algebra; but when a person uses this in arithmetic, it will not work. It is because; there is a difference in nature and individual distinctiveness of a theory or formula. In the same way, determinants of justice are relative depending upon the socio-economic and historical situations of the respective society. So, my stand is that a theory of justice should be formed by the method of corroboration in the society by looking at its own social, cultural and historical situation, where justice is needed. This can be said more as *nīti* mentioned in *bhāratīya darśan* based on the *śrutī* rather than a theory of justice

From the above discussion of Aristotle's and John Rawls' theories of justice, it is candid and transparent that justice should not be taken as definite and fixed axioms or maxims, which can be used to eradicate injustices of any sort, disregarding any sort the relativity and subjectivity of conditions and subjects. However, corroboration is quite helpful and valuable by looking at its own social, cultural, and historical situations where justice is needed. This can be said more as *nīti* which considers the following numbers of the socio-economic, geographical, and historical backgrounds of the separate entity in which the just-ness is being applied. Despite

varied forms in the various fabrics of the world, there is a common element running through these variations of the use that is justice is aimed at ensuring the common interest of entire individuals. For instance, in Aristotle's and John Rawls' discussion of justice, the central theme of their focus was to show the path to the attainment of the well-being of the whole society theory of social justice applied to the basic institutional structure of a modern democratic state.

COMPLIANCE WITH ETHICAL STANDARDS

Acknowledgments:

Not applicable.

Funding:

Not applicable.

Statement of human rights:

This article does not contain any studies with human participants performed by any authors.

Statement on the welfare of animals:

This article does not contain any studies with animals performed by any authors.

Informed consent:

Not applicable.

REFERENCES

1. Acharya, Ashok, and Bhargava Rajeev. 2011. "Political Theory: An Introduction". New Delhi: Pearson Publication.
2. Arrow, K. J. 1973. "Review of Some Ordinalist-Utilitarian Notes on Rawls's Theory of Justice by J. Rawls". *The Journal of Philosophy*, 70(9), 245–263. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2025006>.
3. Bergmann, Barbara R. 1996. "In Defense of Affirmative Action". New York: A New Republic Book: BasicBooks.
4. Burns, T. 1998. "Aristotle and Natural Law". *History of Political Thought*, 19(2), 142–166. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/26217500>.
5. Brennan, Andrew, and Lo, Yeuk-Sze. "Environmental Ethics". *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2016 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL: <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2016/entries/ethics-environmental/>
6. Clark, B. S., & Elliott, J. E. 2001. "John Stuart Mill's Theory of Justice". *Review of Social Economy*, 59(4), 467–490. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/29770132>
7. Cahn, Steven M. 2002. "Affirmative Action Debate", In; Cahn Steven M. (ed) Routledge. New York and London.
8. Cahn, Steven M. 1993. "Affirmative Action and the University: A Philosophical Inquiry". Pennsylvania: Temple University Press.
9. Chapman, J. W. 1975. "Review of 'A Theory of Justice', by J. Rawls". *The American Political Science Review*, 69(2), 588–593. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1959089>.
10. Cohen, Carl, and Sterba, James P. 2003. "Affirmative Action and Racial Preference: A Debate". USA: Oxford University Press, pp. 199–200.
11. Duncan Myrl L. 1981. "The Future of Affirmative Action: A Jurisprudential/ Legal Critique." *Harvard Civil Rights-Civil Liberties Law Review* <eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ275618>.
12. Whitby, G. Stanley. 1937. "Socratic justice". *International Journal of Ethics* 47 (2):193–209.
13. Gladwin, T. N., Kennelly, J. J., & Krause, T.S. 1995. "Shifting Paradigms for Sustainable Development: Implications for Management Theory and Research". *The Academy of Management Review*, 20(4), 874–907. <https://doi.org/10.2307/258959>.
14. Haines, W. A. 2006. "Aristotle on the Unity of the Just". *Méthexis*, 19, 57–77. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43738767>.
15. Heywood, Andrew. 2015. "Political Ideologies: An Introduction". United Kingdom: Palgrave Macmillan Education.
16. Heywood, Andrew. 2015. "Political Theory: An Introduction". United Kingdom: Palgrave Macmillan Education.
17. Maurya, Sooraj Kumar. 2020. "Onto Nature and Forms of Affirmative Action," *International Journal of Social Science, Innovation and Educational Technologies*, 1:03, 272–280. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.3977172>.
18. Maurya, Sooraj Kumar. 2020. "Affirmative Action: A Movement to Attain Gender Equality". *Journal of Critical Reviews*, 7 (18), 227–234. doi:10.31838/jcr.07.18.34.
19. Maurya, Sooraj Kumar. 2021. "Roots, Routes, and Remedies of Gender Discrimination: An Ethical Discourse," *Psychology and Education Journal*, 57(8), 820–834.

20. Maurya, Sooraj Kumar. 2018. "A Critique of John Kekes' Arguments of Affirmative Action". *Zenith International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research*, 8(9), 402-412.
21. Maurya, Sooraj Kumar. 2020. "A Reply to Luo P. Pojman's Article "The case Against Affirmative Action". *Conatus – Journal of Philosophy*, 5(2), 87-113 Doi: .12681/cjp.23660.
22. Maurya, Sooraj Kumar. 2020. "Does Gender Discrimination Rest on a Mistake?". *Journal of Talent Development and Excellence*, 12(2s), 3938-3949.
23. Maurya, S. K. 2021. "The Concept of Justice in Reference with Philosophies of Plato and Aristotle: A Critical Study". *Journal of Liberty and International Affairs*, 7(3), 250-266. <https://doi.org/10.47305/JLIA21370250m>.
24. Maurya, S. K. 2018. "John Kekes' Arguments of Affirmative Action: Revisited". *International Journal of Research and Analytic Reviews*, Volume 5, Issue 3. Pg. No.207y-211y.
25. Maurya, S .K. 2018. "Affirmative Action: A Quest for Descriptive Approach". *Review of Research*, Volume 7, Issue 11. Pg. No.108-112.
26. Maurya, S .K. 2018. "A Critique of John Rawls' Theory of Affirmative Action". *Journal of Emerging Technologies and Innovative Research*, Volume 5, Issue 8. Pg. No.684-690.
27. Maurya, S .K. 2018. "John Rawls' Argument of Affirmative Action: Revisited". *Review of Research*, Volume 7, Issue 10. Pg. No.60-63.
28. Maurya, S. K. 2018. "John Kekes ' Arguments of Affirmative Action : Revisited" 5 (3): 207–11.
29. Maurya S. K. 2018. "'JohnRawls Argument of Affirmative Action: Revisited.'" *Review of Research*. doi:10.9780/2249894X.
30. Miller, D. 1992. "Distributive Justice: What the People Think". *Ethics*, 102(3), 555–593. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2381840>
31. MacKinnon, Catriona. 2018. "Issues in Political Theory", Second edition, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press.
32. Mill, Stuart. John. 2015. "Utilitarianism". New York: Dover Publications, Inc. Mineola, pp. 1-22.
33. Nelson, Brain R. 2017. "Western Political Thought: From Socrates to the Age of Ideology". Second edition, New Delhi: Pearson Publication, Delhi.
34. Rawls, John. 1999. "A Theory of Justice: Revised Edition".Massachusetts: The Balknap Press of Harvard University: Cambridge.
35. Ross. W.D (Tr). 2009. "The Nicomachean Ethics", Revised with an Introduction and Notes by Lesley Brown. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
36. Sandel, Michael J. 2010. "Justice: What's the Right Thing to Do?"USA Inc: Penguin Group, USA Inc.
37. Salkever, S. G. 1981. "Aristotle's Social Science". *Political Theory*, 9(4), 479–508. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/190685>
38. Sowell, Thomas. 2004. "Affirmative Action Around the World: An Empirical Study".New Haven & London: Yale University Press, Preface, p. 191.
39. Taylor, Robert S. 2009. "Rawlsian Affirmative Action." *Ethics*, vol.119 no.3, pp 476-478.,doi: 10.1086/598170.

Copyright © 2022 The author/s
This work is licensed under a CC-BY 3.0 license
(* Corresponding author
Peer review method: Double-blind
Received: 11.04.2022
Accepted: 09.05.2022
Published: 14.06.2022
Review article
DOI: <https://www.doi.org/10.47305/JLIA2282255a>

How to cite:

Ali, Muhamed. 2022. "TURKEY'S SOFT POWER POLICY TOWARDS THE BALKANS: CHALLENGES AND PERSPECTIVES". Journal of Liberty and International Affairs 8 (2):255-65. <https://e-jlia.com/index.php/jlia/article/view/610>.



TURKEY'S SOFT POWER POLICY TOWARDS THE BALKANS: CHALLENGES AND PERSPECTIVES

Muhamed Ali^{1*}

¹University of Sharjah - Sharjah, UAE  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3451-8831> ✉ mali2@sharjah.ac.ae

Abstract: *The Balkans is considered a vital area in international relations. It has always attracted and is still attracting the interest of global and regional powers and factors on the international stage, including Turkey. Besides the political, economic, and defense aspects, the soft power of Turkish multidimensional diplomacy represents one of the most important segments of the relations between Turkey and the Balkan countries. Turkish government institutions like the Diyanet (Presidency of Religious Affairs), Yunus Emre, Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities (YTB), TKA, Turkish State Media, Maarif education institutions, and various non-governmental organizations represent some of the most vital segments of the cultural, religious and educational expansion of the Turkish state in the Balkan countries. This paper is mainly based on the following research methods: historical, descriptive, and in-depth analysis. This study aims to answer the main question of this research - Do the above-mentioned soft power policy tools play a vital role in the further development of Turkey-Balkan countries relations? This paper concludes that the Turkish soft power policy in the Balkans faces a series of challenges that affect its expansion's functionality and success.*

Keywords: Turkey; Balkans; Soft Power; Challenges

INTRODUCTION

Towards the end of the XIV and the beginning of the XV century, the Ottoman Empire appeared on the Balkan scene as the top military, political and economic factor, which referred to this territory as *Avrupa-i Osmani* (Ottoman Europe) and *Rumeli-i Şahane* (Aydoğmuş 2006, 165). During the rule of the Ottoman Empire in this region by the Europeans, it was referred to as "European Turkey" (Davutoğlu 2004, 121-122). At the beginning of the XIX century, in a parallel manner with the political developments on the international scene, these territories were defined by the Europeans by new names, like Balkans and Near (Middle) East, terms that include within themselves subjective elements from the European point of view and perception. In the political literature, the term 'Balkans' and 'Balkan peninsula' was used for the first time in 1808 by the German geographer August Zeune (Davutoğlu 2004, 121-122; Aydoğmuş 2006, 4; Budak 2006, 165-166; Mazower 2001).

The Balkan peninsula is considered a vital area on the international scene because its geostrategic position stretches towards Middle Europe and the Mediterranean. Its geostrategic position is a barrier or a passage between Asia and Europe and is positioned close to the African continent. The Balkans also possesses logistical importance and is playing the role of a base for eventual military operations against the fuel-rich areas. The Balkans also play an essential role in European integration and have particular importance for the influence of EU politics on the Mediterranean and the Middle-Eastern region (Budak 2006, 168-169). Throughout history and nowadays, the Balkans has always attracted and is still attracting the interest of major powers and factors of the international scene. Besides other global and regional factors (like the USA, EU, Russia and China, France, Germany, and Austria), Turkey has also played an essential role in this territory during the recent period.

MAIN COMPONENTS OF TURKEY'S SOFT POWER POLICY IN THE BALKANS

Besides traditional bilateral and multilateral political, economic and defensive relations with the Balkan countries, Turkish diplomacy in the recent period differs more and more by increasing its soft power in this territory. The end of the XX and the beginning of the XXI centuries is seen as a time when, in addition to good trends, relations between Turkey and the Balkan countries face many challenges. Simultaneously, besides the political, economic, and defensive aspects, the cultural aspect of Turkey's multidimensional diplomacy represents one of the most critical segments of the relations mentioned above. Namely, Turkish cultural expansion and influence include governmental and non-governmental sectors playing a vital role in determining Turkey's position in the Balkan countries (Güzeldere 2021). This paper focuses on Turkey's soft power and its reflections in the Balkan region.

YTB (Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities)

One of the most critical tools for Turkey's soft power in the Balkans is the public institution 'Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities (YTB)', established in 2010. This institution, besides other duties, has an objective to support, and assist cultural and social activities of Turkish citizens living abroad, foreign citizens of Turkish origin, and sister communities located in different regions, including the Balkans, such as Albanians, Bosniaks, etc. Through these activities, the institution mentioned above, besides the fact it affirms the values of Turkish tradition and culture outside the country, of them are also the Balkan countries. It is also protecting all Turks outside the borders of Turkey from eventual cultural assimilation. In the direction of reaching the objectives mentioned above, this organization is supporting various NGOs outside the country and awards scholarships to international students for studies at universities in Turkey (Yurtdışı Türkler ve Akraba Topluluklar Başkanlığı 2022).

TIKA (Turkish International Cooperation and Development Agency)

After the fall of the Soviet Union and the establishment of new Turkish republics in Middle Asia in 1992, Turkey decided to establish the state agency TIKa, which had the primary aim to offer technical assistance to those countries in their development process. However, along with the application of the new concept of Turkish foreign politics and the significant development of the Turkish economy at the beginning of the XXI century, a new situation was created where TIKa grew from an agency that was active only in one area into a Turkish state agency active in many areas and on a global scale. Besides the social, educational, and infrastructural activities, this agency is also active in the cultural area. Namely, the Turkish state is also active in a few Balkan countries through this agency. Namely, in the recent period, Turkey has been very active in the domain of restoration of Ottoman historical heritage. As examples of the interest of the Turkish state for investment in the domain of historical heritage of the Ottoman Empire, we could mention the restoration of the Mihrab at the Stone Bridge, the Mustafa Pasha mosque, the Hatuncuk mosque in North Macedonia, the Mostar bridge in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Gazi Mehmet Pasha mosque in Kosovo, the Ethem Beg mosque in Albania and many other religious and historical monuments (Türk İşbirliği ve Koordinasyon Ajansı Başkanlığı, 2022).

Table 1: TIKa Program Coordination Offices in the Balkans (Source: Türk İşbirliği ve Koordinasyon Ajansı Başkanlığı 2022)

North Macedonia	Croatia	Romania	Serbia	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Montenegro	Albania	Kosovo
Skopje	Zagreb	Bucharest	Belgrade	Sarajevo	Podgorica	Tirana	Pristina

Turkish Diyanet (Diyanet or Presidency of Religious Affairs)

The General Directorate (Authority) of Foreign Relations of Turkey's Diyanet is the primary sector that, besides other objectives, it has the objective to develop its relations with representatives of other religions outside the country, which includes the Balkan countries, to monitor and analyze various activities outside Turkey that are focused on Islam, to create solutions for the problems and disputes of the cultural and social character of the Balkan countries citizens with Turkish origin (T.C. Cumhurbaşkanlığı Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı 2022).

The Diyanet possesses 52 consultancy offices for religious services and 38 attaché offices overseas, where more than 2,000 officers of this institution are serving outside the country. Besides religious services, the Diyanet organizes education, Qur'an courses, and theological programs abroad. From more than 11 and a half billion TL awarded from the budget of the Republic of Turkey in 2020, more than 46 million TL were transferred for activities of this institution abroad. According to the strategy of this institution, the objective is to increase the number of foreign educational programs organized by the Diyanet from a total of 160 in 2019 to 1,778 in 2023. The Diyanet continues to build mosques abroad through the Turkish Diyanet

Foundation (Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı). One of the essential activities of this Foundation, whose budget in 2020 was more than 56 million TL, is also the building and restoration of mosques abroad. Besides the dedicated means for the Turkish Diyanet from the budget of the Republic of Turkey last year, the Turkish Diyanet Foundation (Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı) provided additional 536 thousand US dollars for the support of the activities of Turkish Diyanet's consultancy and attaché offices of the Turkish Diyanet abroad (Karakaş, 2022). The Turkish Diyanet has opened several consultancy/counseling and attaches in Balkan countries (Table 2).

Table 2: Turkish Diyanet's Consultancy Offices and Attaches in the Balkans (Source: T.C. Cumhurbaşkanlığı Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı 2022)

Country	City
North Macedonia	Skopje
Kosovo	Pristina
Albania	Tirana
Montenegro,	Podgorica
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Sarajevo
Bulgaria	Sofia
Romania	Constanta

Investments in the Field of Education and Media

At the beginning of the 1990s, Turkey began an educational invasion in the Balkan region through colleges controlled by the Gulen movement. On the other hand, since the beginning of the 2000s, we witnessed the establishment of new high education institutions in the Balkans by foundations related to the ruling party in Turkey - AKP (like the International Balkan University in Skopje, International University of Sarajevo, etc.) (Ali 2010, 155-156; Kir 2008, 4-95). However, after the unsuccessful coup in 2016, which, according to the Turkish government, was organized by the Gulen movement, through the newly established state education institution Maarif, decided to begin a new education offensive in the Balkans by establishing new Turkish educational institutions in some countries of the Balkan region, from primary schools to universities (like the example of Maarif - New York University in Tirana, Maarif schools in Kosovo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia, etc.), to turn them into an alternative of educational institutions controlled by the Gulen movement (Türkiye Maarif Vakfı 2022). It should be highlighted that Turkey has had an intensive activity in the sphere of religion and religious education in the Western Balkans region in the recent period. Numerous students from Western Balkan countries are studying at theological faculties in Turkey. Simultaneously, the Turkish Diyanet is playing an active role in the deepening of relations of Turkey with the Muslim population of this region. Turkish support in the sphere of religious education is welcomed by the Western Balkan countries, bearing in mind that precisely the governments of this region face the phenomenon of fighters returning from the war zones in the Middle East (Ekinci 2017). Besides that, Turkey's soft power in the Western Balkan countries manifests through the broadcasting of Turkish series characterized by high ratings among the population

of these countries. Only in 2010, more than 70 Turkish series were sold abroad, most of them in the Balkans and the Middle East. Their price was somewhere between 30 to 50 US dollars, whereas, in 2010, some series were sold from 20,000 to 50,000 US dollars. The sociologist from North Macedonia Hasan Jashari considers that “the compatibility of some values or traditions from Turkish series with our daily life is making these series even more interesting. The characters, topics, and locations are very familiar to this population. Our culture and geography are close; we are highly connected” (Tumanovska 2012). The broadcasting of Turkish series in the Western Balkan countries increases the incomes in Turkey and increases the influence of this country in the region (Tumanovska 2012). We should also note that Turkey has recently been quite active in the Balkan region with its investments in the media sector. Anadolu Agency Balkans differs by preparing information/news in local Balkan languages, some in Bosnian, Albanian, etc. The establishment of TRT Balkans in 2021, with its headquarters in Skopje, is the best example of that idea (Buyuk 2021).

Yunus Emre Cultural Centers

Yunus Emre cultural centers are active in several Balkan countries. They are functioning within the Yunus Emre Institute with its headquarters in Ankara. They represent one of the most vital segments of the cultural expansion of the Turkish state in the Balkan countries. Namely, the cultural centers played a vital role in developing cultural relations between Turkey and Balkan countries at the beginning of the XXI century. The activities of Yunus Emre Institute in the Balkan region's cities are focused on introducing the Balkan population and institutions to the Turkish language, culture, and history. To realize this objective, this Institute is organizing numerous courses to study the Turkish language, initiates cultural activities and scientific conferences, and publishes various editions that promote the Turkish language, culture, and history. It should be emphasized that the coordination body for turkology is functioning within the Yunus Emre Institute. Namely, through the Turkology project of this Institute in 35 countries and 49 desks of the Turkish language and literature/turkology, the recruitment of academic cadres from Turkey is being coordinated, and simultaneously the educational and technical development of the desks is being assisted. The activities of this project are also focused on the Turkish language and literature desks in various Balkan countries (Yunus Emre Enstitüsü 2022) (Table 3).

Table 3: Cultural Centres of Yunus Emre Institute in the Balkans (Source: Yunus Emre Enstitüsü 2022)

North Macedonia	Croatia	Romania	Serbia	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Montenegro	Albania	Kosovo
Skopje	Zagreb	Bucharest	Belgrade	Sarajevo	Podgorica	Tirana	Prishtina
		Constanta		Mostar		Shkoder	Prizren
				Fojnica			Peje

Non-Governmental Organizations

After the end of the Cold War and the transformation of the bipolar system with the unipolar, just like in many regions in the world, in the same manner, the socio-political, economic, cultural, and other changes began. As a consequence of the beginning of the democratization of these countries, the presence of Turkish non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in these countries began. One of the most active Turkish NGOs in the Albanian Balkan space since the 1990s were the NGOs supported by the Gulen movement, which in the beginning had the support of the Turkish state, and this support was intensified especially during the period of AKP's rule in Turkey. It should be mentioned that, as a consequence of the activities of this movement which began in the 1990s, the establishment of numerous primary and secondary schools took place, as well as two universities in Tirana (Universities of Epoka and Bedër) and the International Burch University in Sarajevo. Besides education, they were very active in business, media, and NGOs. However, after the unsuccessful coup of 15 July 2016, this movement and, consequently, all institutions related to it were officially claimed as terrorist organizations that endanger Turkey's security. Besides the Gulen movement, the Aziz Mahmut Hudayi movement is also active since the end of the 1990s. The beginning of their activities in this region was after the end of the war in Kosovo, where they were active in the distribution of humanitarian aid for the Kosovo population, which was followed by the establishment of the permanent desk of the Istanbul International Brotherhood and Solidarity Association (IBS) in Pristina. Besides dormitories and Qur'an courses in Kosovo, they also re-opened the old Madrasa in Gjakova (Đakovica) town in 2006, where they are training new Hufadh (Solberg 2007).

On the other hand, this religious movement is also active in North Macedonia through its NGO. Another influential religious movement in Turkey is the Suleymaniye movement. The followers of this religious group are active in Albania, Kosovo, North Macedonia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina. One of their main objectives is balancing the Wahabi movement in this region by maintaining the Hanafi/Ottoman tradition. They have established dormitories in various Balkan cities, where besides Qur'an recitation, they also teach ethical fundamentals of Islam. We must not forget to mention NGOs closely connected with the religious movement named 'Nursi', who are dealing with the explanation and translation of books of the well-known scholar Said Nursi in Balkan languages, which are later distributed between the populations (Solberg 2007). Simultaneously, besides other activities of non-governmental organizations of Turkish origin, we are also witnessing reinforcement of relations between Turkish and Balkan municipalities through twinning and organization of various cultural manifestations in some cities of this region with the mutual organization. These are examples depicting Turkey's interest in investment in the culture in the Balkan region.

Medical Aid During the Covid-19 Pandemic

The most recent manifestation of Turkish soft power in the Western Balkans region was during the period of the Covid-19 pandemic. At the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic,

Turkey also provided medical aid for many countries globally, including Western Balkan countries, in their fight against the pandemic. During the pandemic, Turkey sent military aircraft to deliver medical aid to Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Kosovo, and North Macedonia (Lika 2020).

Table 4: Covid-19 Medical Supplies Sent by Turkey to the Western Balkans (March-May 2020)

(Source: Lika 2020)

Country	Type of Supply			
	Protective Masks	Protective Suits	Protective Goggles	Covid-19 Test Kits
Albania	75,000	2,000	2,000	
Bosnia and Herzegovina	50,000	1,000		1,000
Kosovo	50,000	1,000		1,000
Montenegro	50,000	1,000		1,000
North Macedonia (2 times)	125,000	3,000	2,000	1,000
Serbia	100,000	2,000		1,500

TURKISH SOFT POWER POLICY IN THE BALKANS: MAIN CHALLENGES AND PERSPECTIVES

Turkish diplomacy towards Balkan countries in the recent period is also differing through its efficient application of soft power, which is manifested through the deepening of Turkish influence in this region in the sphere of culture, religion, and education, which is very often a subject of discussion between various political and academic elites. Turkish soft power policy in the Balkans is facing numerous challenges. One of the most recent and most complicated challenges in the relations between Turkey and Balkan countries is the issue of the Gulen movement, which is classified by Turkish authorities as a terrorist movement. This attitude very often does not meet understanding by countries of this region. As far as the Turkish NGO's effect in the Balkans is concerned (as a vital tool of Turkish soft power in the region), we should emphasize that these non-governmental organizations have often had a positive role in the Balkan Peninsula in the sphere of humanitarian and cultural activities, however, they have been characterized very often by specific weaknesses. One of the main weaknesses and disadvantages of these NGOs which are active in the Balkans is the fact that they have a sectarian mentality, as a result of which sometimes, some of them might not be open to the ideas of others, something which is opposed to general Islamic values and civilian democratic societies. Very often, some NGOs are transferring their disputes with a political background in the religious field, something that makes some of them might contribute to the ideological/political division of the Muslim population in this region.

On the other hand, the Balkan countries regularly try to cover their economic, social, and cultural failures through the open disputes between these NGOs. The focus of activities of these NGOs towards the raising of cultural values and not division based on political and nationalist

concepts would be a very welcoming attitude towards the advancement of Turkey's relations with Balkan countries. As far as activities of Turkey's Diyanet, Maarif, and TIKA are concerned, although generally observed, these activities are welcomed by the local states and religious and cultural institutions; however, some harsh criticism is not lacking from certain circles, which are defining these investments as part of the Islamic agenda of Erdogan in the Balkans (Meir 2022). Finally, we should not forget the effect of the very weakened Turkish economy in the direction of Turkey's soft power in the Balkans. The newly established situation of the Turkish economy, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic and the Russian invasion of Ukraine, also has negative reflections on the functionality and activity of Turkey's soft power in the region.

CONCLUSION

Turkish diplomacy towards Western Balkans countries, besides a series of challenges (like the economic crisis, etc.) in the recent period, is also differing through efficient application of soft power, which is manifested through the deepening of Turkey's influence in this region in the spheres of culture, religion, education, and which is very often a subject of discussion between various political and academic elites. The soft power of Turkey's multidimensional diplomacy represents one of the essential segments of Turkish diplomacy at the beginning of the XXI century, which has also profoundly affected the relations between Turkey and Balkan countries in the recent period. Turkey's state institutions like the Diyanet (Presidency of Religious Affairs), Yunus Emre, Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities (YTB), TIKA, Turkish State Media, and Maarif educational institutions represent some of the most vital segments of the cultural influence of the Turkish state in Balkan countries. They play a vital role in developing good relations between Turkey and the Balkan countries at the beginning of the XXI century. For other factorization of Turkey on the global stage and development of relations with the Balkan countries, we can recommend increasing investments in the domain of affirmation of Turkish culture in this region. Bearing in mind the fact that Turkey, with its secular system and Muslim identity of its population, represents a model for many countries in the Muslim world and is considered a vital ally of the West, primarily through the increase of Turkish cultural activities in the Balkan region, it can play an essential role for the neutralization of the more and more popular theories of 'clash of civilizations'.

COMPLIANCE WITH ETHICAL STANDARDS

Acknowledgments:

Not applicable.

Funding:

Not applicable.

Statement of human rights:

This article does not contain any studies with human participants performed by any authors.

Statement on the welfare of animals:

This article does not contain any studies with animals performed by any authors.

Informed consent:

Not applicable.

REFERENCES

1. Ali, Muhamed. "Stratejik Derinlik Doktrini Ve Bu Doktrinin Balkalara Yansımaları ". Bursa: The Journal of Balkan Studies. v. 1. no. 2. (2010)
2. Ali, Muhamed. 2010. "Stratejik Derinlik Doktrini Ve Bu Doktrinin Balkalara Yansımaları". *The Journal of Balkan Studies*1 (2).
3. Aydoğmuş, Fatih. 2009. *Soğuk Savaş Sonrası Türkiye'nin Balkanlar Üzerindeki Etkisi (master thesis)*. İstanbul: Y.Ü. Atatürk İlkeleri Ve İnkılap Tarihi Enstitüsü.
4. Aydoğmuş, Fatih, *Soğuk Savaş Sonrası Türkiye'nin Balkanlar Üzerindeki Etkisi (master thesis)*. İstanbul: Y.Ü. Atatürk İlkeleri Ve İnkılap Tarihi Enstitüsü, 2009.
5. Budak, Ömer. 2006. "Türkiye'nin Dünya Ülkeleri Açısından Jeopolitik Önemi Ve Avrasya'daki Yeri". Ankara: Bilge Kitabevi.
6. Büyük, Hamdi Firat. 2021. "Profit and Politics: Euronews and Turkish TRT Step up Balkan Presence". BIRN: Sarajevo. <https://balkaninsight.com/2021/03/12/profit-and-politics-euronews-and-turkish-trt-step-up-balkan-presence/> (29 March 2022)
7. Davutoğlu, Ahmet. 2004. "Stratejik Derinlik". İstanbul: Küre Yayınları. 2004.
8. Güzeldere, Eddy Ekrem. 2021. "Turkey's Soft Power in the Balkans Reaching its Limits" <https://www.eliamap.gr/en/publication/%CF%84%CE%B1-%CF%8C%CF%81%CE%B9%CE%B1-%CF%84%CE%B7%CF%82-%CE%AE%CF%80%CE%B9%CE%B1%CF%82-%CE%B9%CF%83%CF%87%CF%8D%CE%BF%CF%82-%CF%84%CE%B7%CF%82-%CF%84%CE%BF%CF%85%CF%81%CE%BA%CE%AF%CE%B1%CF%82-%CF%83/> (20 March 2022)
9. Ekinci, Uğur Mehmet. 2017. "Türkiye Balkanlar İlişkileri", İstanbul: *SETA Analiz*, 204. https://setav.org/assets/uploads/2017/05/Analiz_204.pdf (05 March 2022)
10. Karakaş, Burcu. 2021. "Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı yurt dışında da büyüyor", <https://www.dw.com/tr/diyanet-i%C5%9Fleriba%C5%9Fkanl%C4%B1%C4%9F%C4%B1-yurt-d%C4%B1%C5%9F%C4%B1nda-da-b%C3%BCy%C3%BCyor/video-59330180>
11. Kır, Alpaslan. 2008. "Türkiye'nin Makedonya Politikasının Balkan Politikası İçerisindeki Yeri" (master thesis). İstanbul: H.A.K. Stratejik Araştırmalar Enstitüsü.
12. Lika, Idil. 2020. "Turkey's Corona Diplomacy in the Balkans". İstanbul: *SETA Analysis*, 64. <https://setav.org/en/assets/uploads/2020/07/A64En.pdf> (29 August 2021)
13. Mazower, Mark. 2021. "The Balkans From The End Of Byzantium To The Present Day". London: Phoenix Press.
14. Meir Ben Alon et al. 2018. "Kosovo And Erdogan's Dangerous Islamic Agenda". <http://alonben-meir.com/writing/kosovo-erdogans-dangerous-islamic-agenda/> (04 February 2022)
15. Solberg, A.R. 2017. "The Role of Turkish Islamic Networks in the Western Balkans". *SÜDOSTEUROPA*, 55 (4). http://www.academia.edu/4163103/The_Role_of_Turkish_Islamic_Networks_in_the_Western_Balkans (29 August 2017)

16. "T.C. Cumhurbaşkanlığı Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı", <https://www.diyanet.gov.tr/tr-TR/Iletisim/Indeks> (02 March 2022)
17. Tumanovska, Marija. "Turskite serii opium za narodot", Radio Slobodna Evropa, Skopje, 2012, <https://www.slobodnaevropa.mk/a/24494696.html/> (01 March 2022).
18. "Türkiye Maarif Vakfı", www.turkiyemaarif.org/ (01 March 2022)
19. "Türk İşbirliği ve Koordinasyon Ajansı Başkanlığı", tika.gov.tr/ (05 March 2022)
20. "Yunus Emre Enstitüsü", <https://www.yee.org.tr/tr/map> (13 March 2022)
21. "Yurtdışı Türkler ve Akraba Topluluklar Başkanlığı", <https://www.ytb.gov.tr/> (07 March 2022)

Copyright © 2022 The author/s
This work is licensed under a CC-BY 3.0 license
(* Corresponding author
Peer review method: Double-blind
Received: 04.03.2022
Accepted: 21.03.2022
Published: 14.06.2022
Review article
DOI: <https://www.doi.org/10.47305/JLIA2282266a>

How to cite:

Ababakr, Amer. 2022. "THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF INTERNATIONAL ORDER: A SHORT OVERVIEW".
Journal of Liberty and International Affairs 8 (2):266-80. <https://e-jlia.com/index.php/jlia/article/view/611>.



THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF INTERNATIONAL ORDER: A SHORT OVERVIEW

Amer Ababakr^{1*}

¹Cyprus International University - Lefkosa, Cyprus  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1868-7256> ✉ amir.mohammadbabekr@gmail.com

Abstract: *The Covid-19 pandemic has affected most of the world, adding health security as a new challenge. Instead of facing these challenges, some states move towards a system of competition and intolerance, which forms new patterns in the international order. This questions the impact of the pandemic on the strategic dynamics of the international order. This article argues that the global pandemic transforms the political system and the way of governing liberal democracy more than any other factor. It took the form of a variable, driver, and accelerator, and the established world order transformed into a new form of order. Using the descriptive-analytical method and the theories of international relations, the current study examined the impact of the pandemic on the strategic dynamics of the international order.*

Keywords: *Covid-19; Pandemic; International Order; IR Theories; Globalization*

INTRODUCTION

The coronavirus outbreak in the world is considered a new world war because it has involved most states in various forms. The world after coronavirus will face various challenges in new security categories such as health, treatment, food, and drug security. Some states seem to be moving towards competition and intolerance rather than working together to meet these challenges. Eventually, will this competition and inconsistency lead to a new set of dynamics in the international arena, with a wide range of countries involved?

Despite these new dynamics, the Covid-19 pandemic cannot be considered an independent variable that changes the existing international order. Instead, it can be seen as a kind of 'variable' or 'accelerator' that will accelerate the change process in the existing international order. Therefore, there is little disagreement about whether the current international order has changed as the Covid-19 pandemic unfolds, how these changes will be intensified and deepened, or how the crisis should be managed. There is a difference of opinion. In this case, experts have had numerous discussions about it. All of these debates can help make international relations more dynamic right now. The current study first addresses the theoretical

perspectives and debates related to the post-coronavirus developments and then the geostrategic developments of the coronavirus pandemic within the existing international order. A coronavirus pandemic is undoubtedly a significant event with health, medical, social, economic, political, and security dimensions that have also affected global and international relations. However, as to what and how this affects, there are conflicting theoretical views on whether the corona crisis could fundamentally change the four structural, agency, normative-institutional, and pattern of interaction that underpin the existing international order.

Therefore, this article investigates the geostrategic developments caused by the coronavirus on the international order in the post-corona era. The coronavirus was able to transform the face of the world from a world full of color, cheers, and vibrancy to a silent, sad, and colorless world. Therefore, its scope of influence on the international order did not stop at that time, and it naturally imposed its effects on the post-coronavirus. The coronavirus outbreak has led some experts to say that the time has come to start changing the world order. Indeed, the beginning of the decline of American power, which many American thinkers, including Farid Zakaria, have spoken of in the post-American era, has begun to whisper about the change in the world order.

The coronavirus has become a pervasive challenge and a pandemic for all countries worldwide. The virus first appeared in China, but soon enough, almost all countries struggle with this disease. Every day, more people contract Covid-19 disease and die due to it. To that end, governments had enacted policies involving more significant intervention in areas beyond their legal authority, imposed restrictions on citizens within their own countries, and quarantined many cities and stock markets after another experienced a decline in its sales index and was falling. Companies, offices, and factories were closed down, and the international transportation system was almost shutting down.

Furthermore, in turn, it can be described as an international catastrophe. One of the most critical issues raised during the coronavirus outbreak is the post-Covid-19 world. Many believe that the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic and the failure of the great powers to stop this disease will cause the world order to change in the days after the coronavirus pandemic. Also, they argue that the time has come to start changing the world order. In fact, with the beginning of the decline of American power, many American thinkers such as Farid Zakaria have spoken of the post-American era. They have begun to whisper the change of world order.

VIEWING THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC THROUGH THE LENS OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS THEORIES

Experts agree that the coronavirus pandemic is accelerating the changing of the existing international order. However, they do not have a shared outlook on these developments 'intensity and depth' or how they should be managed. Some theoretical approaches emphasize the importance of transnational cooperation and strengthening of international institutions, others on strengthening national governments and the need for economic independence, and others on the importance of international moral cooperation based on transcendental rationality

to deal with the coronavirus pandemic and its consequences. In the following, attention is paid to the most important ones.

The conservative liberal, which many believe represents the ruling current of the American international system in the context of the coronavirus pandemic, believes that while the pandemic will cause minor changes in the international system, it cannot be considered a geopolitical turning point. Joseph Nye, a well-known pioneer of the theory, believes that the coronavirus pandemic is unlikely to affect the international order profoundly. In this context, he emphasizes strengthening and continuing the liberal international order led by the United States. Nye argues that the United States can continue to lead the world because of its geopolitical, demographic, and energy advantages. According to him, the only thing that can change this situation is the nationalist approach of the new American leaders (Nye 2021). Conservative liberals see the only way out of the current coronavirus pandemic is to strengthen international cooperation and avoid nationalism.

Conversely, in contrast to liberals, reformist realists believe that with the coronavirus pandemic, the world will see the revival and return of national governments and strengthen their power. On the other hand, liberal globalization based on interdependence will be weakened. According to Realists, governments have not been able to work together to solve the coronavirus pandemic because of their 'selfishness' and 'independence'. This is despite the need for international cooperation in the face of the crisis (Tsarouhas 2021, 52). Realists have long been critical of liberal globalization, arguing that interdependence cannot change the anarchic nature of the international order because it will increase the vulnerability of countries as much as it benefits. Countries around the world are more vulnerable to economic globalization and interdependence than they used to be (Powell 1994).

The effects of the 2008 US financial crisis on other countries are undeniably evident. Stephen Walt, a well-known theorist of this theory, believes that in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, governments have increased their interventions in the political-economic system to manage the crisis and control the emergency, which has led to authoritarianism in some countries, especially in West Asia, because these governments are not readily willing to return to their previous level of authority. Tensions between Donald Trump and New York Governor Andrew Cuomo over how to handle the coronavirus pandemic in this area signaled a shift from protectionism to authoritarianism. Under the pretext of managing quarantine in the country, Trump has called for interference in the internal affairs of US states, which has challenged the US system of federalism (Kissinger 2020). Although the United States is independent in many of its internal affairs, including health, food, economics, and so on, Trump has called for increased authoritarianism and authority over state affairs. This confirms the view of realists in the event of a coronavirus pandemic to strengthen national power and economic independence and increase authoritarianism in a country's system of government.

This theory believes in the possibility and necessity of 'change' in the existing international order because they consider this order unjust and based on unequal economic and ideological structures. Critical theorists have cited the example of unjust ideological structures in managing the coronavirus pandemic. Western liberal countries choose from among the coronavirus patients, and their medical system, like their socio-political system, is based on cost-benefit logic and principles. They abandoned philanthropy and did not prioritize elderly patients

in their medical services (Mngomezulu 2020). Accordingly, critical theorists have criticized the 'cost-benefit' reason based on 'instrumental reason' and, in contrast, have emphasized the 'benefit-benefit' logic based on 'moral-transcendental rationality'. The leading theorists are the famous German thinker Jürgen Habermas and the American theorist Noam Chomsky. At the level of developing countries, officials such as former Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad are among the critical leaders. Mahathir Mohamad also criticized the US liberal policies in managing international politics in an article entitled 'Redrawing Governance in a Multipolar World' in the months leading up to the coronavirus pandemic at the Munich Security Conference (Lemière 2020). He attributed many of the problems in the Islamic world to US interventions and purely materialistic culture. However, critical theorists emphasize the need to avoid the cost-benefit nationalist logic and delegate more powers to transnational institutions.

Given the threats to US hegemony, particularly the deterioration of its soft power position in managing the international coronavirus pandemic 'which even the president had underestimated', some theorists predicted that the coronavirus pandemic would hasten the process of international power transfer and the formation of post-Western international relations. Of course, there is a complete consensus among experts on this point. Joseph Nye believes that a hegemonic power, in addition to having undisputed material power, which is a set of economic and military power, must also be culturally and normatively a universal hegemonic culture. China has no such power (Nye 2021). Given the decline in US hegemony and the rise of China as an economic power with successful experience in managing many crises, including the coronavirus pandemic, it can be concluded that a 'Bipolar order' or 'Multipolar order' will be formed with a Sino-US focus, which will weaken the US international position day by day. However, while we may not see a shift in international relations towards a Chinese hegemonic order in the short term, China's growing power, especially in recent years, promises to move to one of the poles.

THE CHANGING OF INTERNATIONAL ORDER UNDER THE STRATEGIC EFFECTS OF THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

The Covid-19 pandemic as an accelerating variable, in addition to influencing theoretical debates and theories of international relations, has also affected the strategic developments and dynamics of the international system, the most important results of which include the following: in the weakening of globalization, many believe that the coronavirus pandemic in the world has led states to conclude that they must separate. It no longer makes sense to unite the world. They believe that 'in order for the security of countries' relations not to be compromised, their economic dependencies must be separated. They conclude that there should be a reconsideration of the 'international supply system' and the international transmission network "emphasizing the independent role of states and domestic authorities", at least in the case of health goods (Makin and Layton 2021, 347). Since then, the coronavirus pandemic has exacerbated these intertwined international systems and the inefficiency of states in dealing with it (Barzani and Jalal 2021, 34). Due to the lack of independence of many states in the production of medical goods and services, including the production of diagnostic kits, advanced respirators, and effective drugs, and as a result of the interconnected production networks and supply of

medical goods among many states, especially Western countries, any independent and effective action by each of these states has faced difficulties and challenges.

It is worth mentioning that after the collapse of the Soviet Union, global supply and demand chains were tied to the US state. Due to the existence of a single chain, a system of shared interests was created for most countries; “as this global system of supply and demand expanded, so did the conflict between powers” (Carreño *et al.* 2020). This system, which resulted from US rule and governance after the Cold War, created a fascination and popularity for some international powers that used it to manage the international system. The United States acted as the ‘regulator’ of this global supply-demand chain, resulting in the formation of a White House-centered global convergence and the resolution of crises with US intervention and involvement. An example of this was the US government’s role in resolving the 2008 financial crisis by intervening and manipulating global economic markets.

However, the problems of recent years, especially after the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic, which posed serious challenges for the United States, have challenged its role as a ‘regulator of the global supply and demand system’. This situation, accompanied by a kind of break-in globalization, has left the United States more insecure and vulnerable (Debata Patnaik and Mishra 2020). This is because it is no longer considered a regulator of the global supply and demand system ‘global hegemony’, but the evolving problems caused by the coronavirus pandemic have reduced US global maneuvering and intensified global competition, which is putting the global interests of the United States in danger. Under these circumstances, as Realist thinkers of international relations argue, convergence between states is no longer an issue, and many actors see themselves as “losers of globalization” (Keohane 2021, 117). Because globalization and the integration of countries into trade and economic unions have not solved a problem for them in times of coronavirus pandemic, this independent and complex international system has added to their problems. This group of Realists concluded that due to the inability of this system, and consequently the efforts of countries to maintain economic independence and self-help, globalization is cracking and collapsing. As a result, we will see a kind of ‘centralism’ in countries’ government systems or international supply and demand systems.

Furthermore, the ‘regional influence’ of actors increased competition. Following the spread of the coronavirus pandemic throughout the world and, consequently, the rupture in globalization, one of the concepts gaining importance and subjectivity is the issue of ‘regional influence’. The Rand Institute addresses this issue in a report entitled ‘The Impact of Covid-19 on Strategic Movements in the Middle East’. The paper identifies the region’s most important post-Covid-19 consequences, such as the development of the Iran-US confrontation on the periphery and additional Russian and Chinese interventions in the Middle East, which, if the crisis persists, will transform the region’s security. (Kaye 2020). Many thinkers believe that today’s world moves where the United States can no longer contain its regional influence. Hence, it must recognize the regional influence of competitors. Leading Harvard professor Graham Allison, in a new article in *Foreign Affairs Magazine* (March-April 2021) titled ‘Regional Influence Must Be Recognized’, shows the flag of returning US ships from the region to explain the reduction of US influence in different parts of the world and, consequently, the acceptance of competition by the great powers (Allison 2020). In addition, Graham Schuler, a well-known Neoclassical Realist, also redefined ‘power and security’ in an article in the same *Foreign Affairs* magazine, stating that

with the coronavirus pandemic, we are witnessing a phenomenon called 'We are a World of Regions' and moving towards a more geopolitical world. Schuler cites China's competition in the Pacific and regional powers' presence in the Gulf as examples of the post-Covid-19 world.

Competition resulting from the coronavirus pandemic can take shape at the geopolitical and ideological level in the region. Reducing energy prices and, consequently, increasing or decreasing the presence of powers in peripheral regions, for example, the presence of Russia and China in West Asia, the presence of Saudi Arabia in Yemen, the presence of Iran in peripheral regions, etc., can lead to geopolitical rivalries between the powers of this region. Falling oil prices could also increase ethnic-security conflicts within different countries. For example, 90% of Iraq's budget depends on oil which could lead to instability given the social unrest in recent years that has led to Prime Minister Adel Abdul-Mahdi (Brankston *et al.* 2021, 369). On the other hand, these rivalries took place between different political systems and ideologies on managing and overcoming the coronavirus pandemic.

In addition, the importance of religion and ethics during the pandemic has emerged in the current context among many religious leaders and even political scientists who pay attention to the importance of religion in the coronavirus and post-coronavirus world. According to Daniel Winston, a professor at the University of California, Corona is a 'divine punishment'. Therefore, all world leaders must address this essential human dilemma through solidarity, closeness to each other, and altruistic practices. The 2035 Atlantic Council report also addresses this issue. In the new (coronavirus) context, the report said we must have a renaissance in economics, politics, religion, and spirituality (Prazeres Bohl and Zhang 2021). The critical point made by some scholars and officials, and even claimed by the President of the United States, is 'praying' to God, and those in times of human despair, God is the only savior of humanity. This shows that transcendental and metaphysical issues are gaining strength even among those who do not have much faith in spirituality and morality (Bahi 2021, 89). Religious scholars and theologians raise the issue of sincere cooperation among different religions. They say that Islam, Judaism, Christianity, and other divine religions must have stronger ties and work together to fight this disease.

SHOULD THE WORLD GET READY FOR THE NEW ORDER?

After the Peace of Westphalia in 1648, the system of international relations was based on the 'balance of power' system. This meant that power in the world was evenly distributed among the powerful European states by joining or separating. This created a balance of power between countries and thus prevented one state from dominating the other states. After World War I, and the defeat of Germany, a new system called the 'Collective Security System', was introduced by then-US President Wilson (Andreatta and Koenig-Archibugi 2010, 215). Consequently, all states, 'not just the great powers', sought to choose a cooperation strategy to achieve world peace. With the failure of the collective security system to establish and maintain world peace, the victorious and powerful nations of World War II established a bipolar order centered on the United States and the Soviet Union. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, a new order reigned in the world. At present, different theories about world order are being proposed by thinkers (Caplan Reis and Grasten 2021, 11).

Some believe that a hierarchical system rules the world, while others use 'unipolar-multipolar' term. In any case, the United States sees itself as the superpower of the current world order. The decline of American power, which many American thinkers, such as Farid Zakaria, have spoken of since the post-American era, has led to whispers of a change in the global order.

Covid-19 has caused many international structures to show their practical inefficiency (Ramsey and Chen, 2021). In the current context, states worldwide have tightened their grip on the global economy, leading to economic nationalism and economic independence. Even Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte stressed: First, let us defeat the virus, then think about Europe, and if necessary, say goodbye to the EU, without even thanking it. (Kahl 2021). In the current context, states worldwide have tightened their grip on the global economy, leading to economic nationalism and economic independence. They have begun to stockpile food and increase their strategic reserves. After all, it looked like we would see more nationalism and less globalism. In addition, Henry Kissinger, a former secretary of state and national security adviser to the Nixon and Ford administrations, in an article in the Wall Street Journal, refers to the global outbreak of the coronavirus and its economic and political consequences (Kissinger 2020). In this warning, Kissinger predicts that the political and economic crises caused by this disease will continue for a long time and future generations. The American political theorist also warned of the weakening of nations' relations due to the virus and the collapse of regional and international social ties.

Overall, the outbreak of the Covid-19 throughout the world and the imposition of staggering costs on states have prompted many to speak of a shift in power in the international arena. Throughout history, the rules of international relations and crises have shifted. Undoubtedly, the Covid-19 pandemic is one of the greatest humanitarian crises of the last few centuries. Of course, it should be noted that the signs of change in the world order first appeared many years ago, and the decline of the United States as the creator of the current order is the biggest reason for the possibility of global change. The growth of nationalist tendencies and the fading of liberal doctrines and norms will accelerate this process.

THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND THE 'GEOMETRY OF POWER'

Some believe that we will see the end of liberal globalization, while others consider that humanity will experience another kind of globalization, centered on China. So much so that the current globalization and liberal order, based on America's undisputed hegemony and role-playing, is now shifting to China. In this regard, we should not ignore the actions of Trump, who, with the slogan 'America First' and the policies he adopted, actually dealt a heavy blow to the liberal world system of which the United States itself was the architect after World War II. Therefore many Liberals attacked him (Li 2021). Of course, there is much consensus that the coronavirus disease is a driver of the transfer of power from the United States to China. However, there is also a belief that this transfer of power geometry cannot be fully hoped for soon. This is because of China's strategic isolation, unlike the United States, which has a global NATO arm and prominent allies such as Europe, Japan, South Korea, and many other East and West Asia. The United States has a security-defense pact with 130 countries, while China has territorial and border problems. In addition to the US World Military Aristocracy, the United

States has bases in 96 parts of the world, including 43 countries and islands, or has the right to use them. The number of Chinese overseas bases is only three, which is conditional (OHCHR 2021). The US has strategic dominance over the Atlantic and Pacific oceans. However, China dominates only part of the China Sea south and east of the Pacific, also associated with intense US competition and presence.

The Covid-19 pandemic's other influence stems from the competition between different political systems and beyond, between opposing political ideologies, over how to manage and emerge victorious from this crisis. Which model of government and governance can best manage the coronavirus pandemic is a critical issue and plays a decisive role in the post-coronavirus international system. Noam Chomsky believes that after the Covid-19 pandemic, we will see two kinds of political order and governance model: one is the strengthening of authoritarian and extremist authoritarian states; the other is actual democratic states accountable to the people, 'not necessarily liberal democracies' who want more legitimacy and popular responsibility (Grieco 2018). Another model would be a return to the restored welfare states because neoliberal states have been widely criticized for failing to intervene in health care and public health - for being uneconomical and incompatible with the cost-benefit logic of capitalism - which has clearly shown its harmful effects and inefficiency in the Covid-19 pandemic. We see a clear example of welfare states today in the Scandinavian countries. Hence, some argue that the neoliberal order should be redefined and replaced by a reformed form of the welfare state (Basur and Kliem 2021). Responsible governments come to power and play a more significant role in the public sphere, especially for health care and public health and welfare.

The Covid-19 pandemic and its management in European countries have also affected the European Union. This is primarily based on the fact that today, the European Union is the 'sick man of Europe'. This Union is not in a favorable or even acceptable position internally and globally. Despite all the efforts made to strengthen this Union, it faces problems and challenges in internal cohesion and international mapping. In its internal structure, it has lost one of the main pillars of the Union, namely England, with the election issue (Capan Reis and Grasten 2021). During the Covid-19 pandemic, the rapid growth of casualties in the EU and the inability to manage and support the EU organization to control the disease and meet the medical needs of EU countries resulted in whispers heard in public circles and politicians of some EU countries to end cooperation with it. There are three different and conflicting views on what and how the Covid-19 pandemic will affect the fate and future of the European Union:

A pessimistic and radical view that believes in the collapse of Europe, proponents of this case has been working to make the actual transcript of this statement available online. As a result, the crisis and how it will be managed will accelerate the process of leaving the EU, which began with the election (Carreño *et al.* 2020). They argue that signs of this situation are now evident in Europe. Some opposition figures in EU countries are also talking about the possibility of considering the country's exit plan from the European Union.

In contrast, some argue that the Covid-19 pandemic did not lead to the EU's demise but rather encouraged convergence and collaboration inside the EU. Since the EU does not have the necessary institutions and mechanisms for the collective management of the Covid-19, such mechanisms will be created after the Covid-19 pandemic (Tsarouhas 2021, 53).

This crisis led to the transfer of more healthcare powers from national governments to EU institutions, which strengthened and deepened European transnationalism. Accordingly, Europeanists such as Habermas emphasize the need to avoid nationalism and unilateralism in dealing with this crisis and its collective management. Habermas, for example, has recommended the establishment of a joint coronavirus pandemic fund in the European Union.

In the form of Realism, the third view is that the EU will see a kind of divergence. Vertical and horizontal convergence in Europe weakened, and the North-South divide in the EU intensified. Because the Southerners are most affected by the Covid-19 and have not received any help from the Northerners (Makin and Layton 2021, 347). It also deepens the East-West divide in the Union between old and new Europe. Eastern countries remain in this Union because they have more benefits from joining it.

In contrast, there will be a greater tendency to diverge in Western European countries. It is also envisaged that in the process of divergence, some of the powers and powers of national sovereignty that the members had delegated to the Union would be taken back. As a result, Europe will see a kind of spill-back. Also, as the European Union's democratic deficit continues to be compensated, it seems that the role of the people in determining their destiny will increase in the form of holding all-out polls to realize divergences. The depiction of the post-Corona world situation reflects essential developments in the international system, including the weakening of globalization, the rise of global-regional competition, the recession and the challenge of the global economy, and the weakening of international cooperation. In addition, the performance of Western liberal states in adopting the cost-benefit logic and economic-health dichotomy during the Covid-19 pandemic has left the Western liberal-democratic model incapable in the face of many current international crises. On the other hand, it increases the tendency towards 'socially responsible states' that simultaneously play a more significant role in public service and consider human values independent of material gain in times of crisis.

The Covid-19 pandemic's effect at the international level is the change in patterns of friendship and enmity in international relations. The patterns of interaction between international actors change and transform. On the one hand, the positive interaction of cooperation between some Eastern powers, such as China and Russia, increased. Bilateral trade between Russia and China increases thanks to high energy prices, increased Russian coal exports to China via Far Eastern ports, and increased gas flows through the Power of Siberia pipeline. According to opinion polls, these favorable trends are also evident to the general population in both countries. The pandemic did not affect ordinary Russians' favorable feelings toward China (Pan 2021).

On the other hand, as the competition between China and India intensifies, China's handling of the Covid-19 pandemic has bolstered the country's skepticism in many sectors in India. The Indian government's rhetoric has been restrained, reflecting the country's need for medical supplies from China and its desire to maintain a stable relationship. Nevertheless, Beijing's handling of the Covid-19 pandemic has exacerbated Delhi's underlying strategic and economic concerns. India's pharmaceutical sector imports most of its advanced pharmaceutical ingredients from China. Another concern is Chinese entities exploiting the crisis and China's apparent early recovery for various purposes (Madan 2021).

Another outcome of the Covid-19 pandemic is the likelihood that cooperation between Iran and the Gulf Arab states has strengthened in resolving the ongoing situation. Qatar, Kuwait, and the United Arab Emirates have delivered humanitarian aid to Iran during the Ebola pandemic. The UAE extended an incredibly kind gesture by sending flights carrying WHO experts to the Persian Gulf country. This outreach appears to be motivated by three factors. Aid may help these Gulf states soften any planned Iranian hostility toward their neighbors and earn some credit for their 'acts of kindness' globally. By offering medical assistance now, Gulf powers may be exposing the regime's inability to care for its citizens. The crisis may make Iran more receptive to de-escalating hostilities to address domestic issues (Singh 2021).

Furthermore, authoritarianism is increasing in Western Asia, characterized by the repression of opposition. The epidemic has had the most immediate impact on Southeast Asia's governance through the acts of leaders who have used the crisis to expand their powers and punish political adversaries. The most widespread power grabs have occurred in Cambodia, the Philippines, and Thailand, the three countries that have trended poorly in recent years. In handling the pandemic in Southeast Asia, Vietnam and Singapore led the way with their early national responses (Harding 2020).

More importantly, competition between the United States and China has become more militant. The pattern of cooperation between the United States and Europe also weakened, and the pattern of competition between the two strengthened. Evidence for this claim is that today we see more cooperation and coordination outside the Western world. However, in the Western world, we see a deepening gap between the two sides of the Atlantic (Europe and the United States). So, Europeans were very dissatisfied with the US position, especially during the Trump era. In the post-Crown international system, intra-bloc competition intensifies in the Western world.

CONCLUSION

It can be concluded from what has been suggested that the Covid-19 pandemic affects all four components of structure, agency, normative-institutional, and pattern of interaction that are the basis of the existing international order. First, political systems and liberal governance are subject to change domestically. Second, new actors and powers outside the West strengthened. As a result, at the structural level, the material structure of the international system, which means how the units are arranged, also changes. At the normative-institutional level, liberal values, norms, and institutions based on liberalism as an ideology that legitimizes the established international system are weakened and transformed. Eventually, the pattern of interactions means patterns of friendship, enmity, competition, and cooperation between international actors.

Consequently, whether we like it or not, the post-Covid-19 international system is different from the existing international system and the order established within it. We must prepare ourselves for a post-Covid-19 world in which the nature of the political order and the way of governing are different. According to this article, the Covid-19 pandemic radically transforms the political system and current liberal democracy more than any other factor. In the form of a variable, driver, and accelerator, the established world order is transformed into the

following forms: It changes the patterns of friendship and enmity in international relations. The positive cooperation between Eastern powers, such as China and Russia, has increased. The possibility of cooperation between Iran and the Arab countries to manage the current crisis has also increased. Authoritarianism is on the rise in West Asia. The economies of Western countries are in a recession. Single-product economies such as oil can be challenged in Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and Russia. Competition between China and India has intensified. The competition pattern between the United States and China has become more militant. The pattern of cooperation between the United States and Europe has also been weakened, and the pattern of competition between the two has been strengthened. Collaboration and coordination are increasing outside the Western world.

In addition, it widened the gap between the two sides of Atlantic Europe and America. The intra-bloc competition has intensified in the West. The Covid-19 pandemic is a mediating variable from the realists' point of view, a disturbing variable from the American point of view, and an independent variable from the idealists' point of view that can move the United States from the independent security balance variable to the disruptive function variable. A united Europe as a second power continued to follow the United States, and beyond the Covid-19 pandemic, the Union's power and role at the international level have greatly diminished. The bottom line is that liberal globalization also faced many challenges in the post-Crown world, and we are witnessing the strengthening of nation-states and economic mercantilism.

COMPLIANCE WITH ETHICAL STANDARDS

Acknowledgments:

Not applicable.

Funding:

Not applicable.

Statement of human rights:

This article does not contain any studies with human participants performed by any authors.

Statement on the welfare of animals:

This article does not contain any studies with animals performed by any authors.

Informed consent:

Not applicable.

REFERENCES

1. Allison, Graham. 2020. "The New Spheres of Influence Sharing the Globe With Other Great Powers". *The Foreign Affairs Magazine*, 20 March. Access 14 November 2021. <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2020-02-10/new-spheres-influence>
2. Andreatta, Filippo, Koenig-Archibugi, Mathias. 2010. "Which Synthesis? Strategies of Conceptual Integration and the Neorealist-Neoliberal Debate". *International Political Science Review* 31(2): 207–27. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0192512110364258>
3. Bahi, Riham. 2021. "The Geopolitics of COVID-19: US-China Rivalry and the Imminent Kindleberger Trap". *Review of Economics and Political Science* 6(1): 76-94. <https://doi.org/10.1108/REPS-10-2020-0153>
4. Basrur, Rajesh, Kliem, Frederick. 2021. "COVID-19 and International Cooperation: IR Paradigms at Odds". *SN Social Sciences* 1(1), 1-10. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s43545-020-00006-4>
5. Barzani, Sami & Jalal, Rayan. (2021). "Students' Perceptions towards Online Education during COVID-19 Pandemic: An Empirical Study". *International Journal of Social Sciences & Educational Studies*, 8(2): 28-38.
6. Brankston, Gabrielle, and et al. 2021. "Socio-Demographic Disparities in Knowledge Practices and Ability to Comply with COVID-19 Public Health Measures in Canada". *Canadian Journal of Public Health* 112(3): 363-75. <https://doi.org/10.17269/s41997-021-00501-y>
7. Capan, Zeynep, Reis, Filipe, and Grasten, Maj. 2021. "The Politics of Translation in International Relations". In: Zeynep Gulash, Filipe dos, Grasten, eds. *The Politics of Translation in International Relations*. UK: Palgrave Macmillan. 1-19.
8. Carreño, Ignacio et al. 2020. "The Implications of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Trade". *European Journal of Risk Regulation* 11(2): 402-10. <https://doi.org/10.1017/err.2020.48>
9. Debata, Byomakesh, Patnaik, Pooja and Mishra, Abhisk. 2020. "COVID-19 Pandemic! It's Impact on People Economy and Environment". *Journal of Public Affairs* 20(4): 23-72. <https://doi.org/10.1002/pa.2372>
10. Grieco, Joseph. 2018. "Realism Neoliberal Institutionalism and the Problem of International Cooperation". In: Katzenstein, ed. *Cooperation among Nations*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press. 27-50.
11. Harding, Brian. 2020. "Is Coronavirus Making Southeast Asia More Authoritarian?". *The United States Institute of Peace*. June 2020. Access 20 March 2022. <https://www.usip.org/publications/2020/06/coronavirus-making-southeast-asia-more-authoritarian>
12. Kaye, Dalia. 2020. "COVID-19 Impacts on Strategic Dynamics in the Middle East". *The RAND Corporation*, 26 March. Access 10 November 2021. <https://www.rand.org/blog/2020/03/covid-19-impacts-on-strategic-dynamics-in-the-middle.html>
13. Keohane, Robert. 2020. "International Institutions and State Power: Essays in International Relations Theory". Oxford: Routledge.

14. Keohane, Robert. 2021. "The Global Politics Paradigm: Guide to the Future or Only the Recent Past". *International Theory* 13(1): 112-21.
<https://doi.org/10.1017/S1752971920000445>
15. Kissinger, Henry. 2020. "The Coronavirus pandemic Will Forever Alter the World Order". *The Wall Street Journal*, 3 April. Access 10 November 2021.
<https://www.wsj.com/articles/the-coronavirus-pandemic-will-forever-alter-the-world-order-11585953005>
16. Lemièrè, Sophie. 2020. "The never-ending political game of Malaysia's Mahathir Mohamad". *The Brookings Institution*, 30 October. Access 22 November, 2021.
<https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2020/10/30/the-never-ending-political-game-of-malaysias-mahathir-mohamad/>
17. Li, Xirui. 2021. "Why China and the United States Aren't Cooperating on COVID-19". *East Asia Forum* 24, Access 19 November, 2021.
<https://www.eastasiaforum.org/2021/07/24/why-china-and-the-united-states-arent-cooperating-on-COVID-19/>
18. Madan, Tanvi. 2021. "How is the coronavirus outbreak affecting China's relations with India?". *The Brookings Institution*. June 2021. Access 20 March 2022.
<https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2020/04/30/how-is-the-coronavirus-outbreak-affecting-chinas-relations-with-india/>
19. Makin, Anthony, and Layton, Allan. 2021. "The Global Fiscal Response To COVID-19: Risks And Repercussions". *Economic Analysis and Policy* 69, 340-9.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.eap.2020.12.016>
20. Mngomezulu, Bheki. 2020. "The Politics of the Coronavirus and its Impact on International Relations". *African Journal of Political Science and International Relations* 14(3): 116-25. <https://doi.org/10.5897/AJPSIR2020.1271>
21. Nye, Joseph. 2021. "Soft power: the evolution of a concept". *Journal of Political Power* 14(1), 1-13. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2158379X.2021.1879572>
22. OHCHR. 2021. "In Defence of a Renewed Multilateralism to Address the COVID-19 Pandemic and Other Global Challenges: Report". *UN Human Rights: Office of the High Commissioner*, 18 September. Access 29 November, 2021.
<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/IntOrder/Pages/covid19-multilateralism.aspx>
23. Powell, Robert. 1994. "Anarchy in International Relations Theory: The Neorealist-Neoliberal Debate". *International Organization* 48(2): 313-44.
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/2706934> (accessed 27 November 2021).
24. Pan, Yanliang, 2021. "Post-Pandemic, Russia and China Must Improve Migration Governance". *Carnegie Moscow Center*. June 2021. Access 20 March 2022.
<https://carnegiemoscow.org/commentary/86089>
25. Prazeres Tatiana, Bohl, David and Zhang, Pepe. 2021. "China-LAC Trade: Four Scenarios in 2035". *Atlantic Council*, May 2021. Access 18 November, 2021.
<https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/in-depth-research-reports/china-lac-trade-four-scenarios-in-2035/>
26. Ramsey, Austin and Chen, Amy. 2021. "Rejecting Covid-19 Inquiry, China Peddles Conspiracy Theories". *New York Times*, 12 October. Access 10 November, 2021.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/08/25/world/asia/china-coronavirus-covid-conspiracy-theory.html>

27. Singh, Manjari. 2021. "The Influence of Coronavirus on Diplomatic Relations: Iran, China, Gulf Arabs, and India". *The Washington Institute for Near East Policy*. May 2022. Access 20 March 2021. <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/influence-coronavirus-diplomatic-relations-iran-china-gulf-arabs-and-india>
28. Tsarouhas, Dimitris. 2021. "Neoliberalism Liberal Intergovernmentalism and EU–Turkey Relations. In EU-Turkey Relations: Theories, Institutions, and Policies". In: Reiners and Turhan, eds. UK: Palgrave Macmillan Cham. 39-61.

Copyright © 2022 The author/s
This work is licensed under a CC-BY 3.0 license
(*) Corresponding author
Peer review method: Double-blind
Received: 04.04.2022
Accepted: 09.05.2022
Published: 14.06.2022
Review article
DOI: <https://www.doi.org/10.47305/JLIA2282281a>


How to cite:

Ahmad, Rukhsar. 2022. "THE LEGAL ROLE OF GOVERNMENT IN PROTECTING CULTURAL HERITAGE AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES IN THE WAR-AFFECTED COUNTRIES: THE CASE OF IRAQ AND SYRIA". *Journal of Liberty and International Affairs* 8 (2):281-92. <https://e-jlia.com/index.php/jlia/article/view/612>.



THE LEGAL ROLE OF GOVERNMENT IN PROTECTING CULTURAL HERITAGE AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES IN THE WAR-AFFECTED COUNTRIES: THE CASE OF IRAQ AND SYRIA

Rukhsar Ahmad^{1*}

¹University of Raparin, Iraq  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6146-3250> ✉ rukhsar.ramazan@gmail.com

Abstract: *Conserving cultural heritage and archaeological sites have become a serious national concern in the Middle East for the war-affected countries, including Iraq and Syria. Because looting and violence have caused massive destruction of cultural heritage and archaeological sites, this study aimed to analyze the legal background concerning the protection of cultural heritage and archaeological sites in the context of Iraq and Syria during 2014 with the rise of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS). This study used the content analysis method and cross-country analyses for Iraq and Syria. The study is guided by two main questions: What is the government's legal role in protecting cultural heritage and archaeological sites? Are there any legal authorities in Iraq and Syria to protect cultural heritage and archaeological sites during war and conflict? In the end, this paper suggests that protecting cultural heritage is the legal responsibility of government which is supposed to be enforced in the legal foundation of the state as a national sovereign power.*

Keywords: *Legal Role of Government; Cultural Heritage; Archaeological Sites; Iraq; Syria; War*

INTRODUCTION

In the last decades, cultural heritage and archaeological sites have been under various attacks during wars and conflicts that have been vivid in the cases of Iraq and Syria, particularly since the rise of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria in 2014. In essence, considering the protection of cultural property during the armed conflict is mainly based on the mechanisms and available means of international cultural heritage protection and international humanitarian law (Red Cross 2010). The cultural heritage and property range in scope and time from ancient human remains and subtle traces of early human occupation to spectacular rock art and major iconic monuments of the entire civilization. Protecting the cultural heritage and archaeological sites is the shared responsibility of the people and government in power in each country. Enforcing a legal framework should be for protecting cultural heritage during armed conflict. However, the existing international bodies and their instruments have failed to facilitate an effective response (Higgins 2020). In the case of Iraq and Syria, the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria

(ISIS) has destroyed cultural heritage, archeological sites, and smuggled artifacts first to erase the civilization and national identity of diverse ethnic and religious groups and spread compassion for its beliefs among its followers. Since the early attacks, ISIS has publicly shown the organized and targeted destruction at two promenade sites first Palmyra in Syria and Nabi Younis Shrine (Jonah's tomb) in 2014. As a terrorist group, ISIS has destroyed the religious symbol of coexistence and tolerance.¹ In addition, religious identity is associated with cultural property that ISIS targeted in Iraq and Syria (Arimatsu and Choudhury 2018).

Valuing cultural heritage and the historical remaining of the previous generations should be protected by law. In the case of Iraq and Syria, conflict and war have caused massive destruction. Based on the evidence in the literature, when the United States military took control of Baghdad, soon the Iraq Museum, the world's largest repository of ancient Mesopotamian art and artifacts, was looted. For the looting of archaeological sites, museums, and heritage goods, the United States has been blamed for allowing the looting to occur (Rush 2010). Similarly, in 2014, ISIS conducted cultural terrorism by destroying and looting cultural heritage, sites, and antiquities in Iraq and Syria. Concerning 2014 and the organized attacks of ISIS is against art. 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which stipulated the right of religious freedom. The occupied areas by ISIS in Iraq and Syria were the locations most imminent to destruction and threat of looting and demolishing like Hatra and Nineveh (Curry 2015).

In the XXI century, many archaeological sites and ancient architectures, including monuments, have been at risk of destruction in Iraq and Syria. Promoting awareness has been the duty of civil society organizations, the public, and academic institutions. In contrast, many challenges have weakened the government's responsibility as a legal guardian. While finding and understanding archaeological sites have led to a desire to preserve them (Sullivan and Mackay 2012). Many factors affect the survival and maintaining archaeological sites and heritage in any country. According to Teutonico (2002), various sources threaten the survival of heritage while modern society's development is a significant factor among the many.

Moreover, threats can be identified only by observing the patterns of destruction affecting the cultural heritage and archaeological sites. There is also a distinction, which is required between artificial and natural threats. Naturals are generally associated with the environment and natural phenomena that affect it. Cultural cleansing creates fear during armed conflict. While governments cannot protect those national assets without government, cultural heritage is protected under the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in armed conflict events (Cuno and Weiss 2020). In principle, Archaeological heritage sites should be under a clear management guide to even protect them from private interest as the private sector exploits the sites to make the desired profit (Comer 2003).

In Syria, the escalation of violence during the civil war has had a devastating effect on the country's cultural heritage sites. These cities continue to be casualties of the ongoing Syrian civil war, resulting in damage and looting of cultural heritage (Seyfi and Hall 2021). Globally, introducing heritage protection has been processed; thus, some countries train their peacekeepers to protect heritage during peace missions, such as Italy. It is crucial to engage communities to learn about heritage protection, looting, and trafficking (Cuno and Weiss 2020).

¹See more at UNESCO: <https://en.unesco.org/fieldoffice/baghdad/revivemosul/heritage>

LITERATURE REVIEW

Archeological site conservation and management is a dual responsibility of the government and the people. This field is still a relatively young field of study and has less been discovered by scholars. Thus a limited number of resources are available for protecting the archaeological sites from wars and man-made crises. Developing policies and the legal foundation for protecting cultural heritage and archaeological sites requires the government's commitment. The modern archaeological conservations are met in appreciating the antiquities, ancient architecture, and monuments, especially in Egypt, Greece, and Rome (Sullivan and Mackay 2012).

Furthermore, Teutonico (2002) has addressed the effect of man-made factors that affect the archaeological heritage, such as Beirut and other places where development, pollution, and poor planning have left negative influences on the sites. Besides, mass tourism also has a negative effect regardless of the profit tourism accumulates, such as in the case of Volubilis, Morocco, where tourists climb the walls to take better pictures of the mosaic floor. Along with other factors, vandalism as a tourist attitude and behavior has been experienced in many archaeological sites, including the Iraqi Kurdistan region, where tourists used to write their names and memories on the walls and rocks in the destinations they often visit. However, what has been mentioned and experienced in the literature is far less influential than the impact of wars and conflicts on cultural heritage and archaeological sites. There are various reasons for destruction and a lack of care for archaeological sites and cultural heritage. Among those is the lack of interpretation and representation of archaeological sites to the public as they are underdeveloped in theory and practice (La Torre 1997).

Wars and conflicts have two different effects; the first is that the destruction made during the war period, like the Second Gulf War, has been enormous. The civil wars have been destructive in many ways, such as accidents of looting, in which Teutonico (2002) highlighted the case of Lebanon during the Civil war between 1975-1992, where the sites in the Biqqa Valley were exposed to looting and the artifacts were sold on the antiquities market for financing the war. In the case of Lebanon Anjar, a World Heritage site, it is used for military purposes, which has damaged many of its monuments. In the same vein, wars in countries including Bosnia, similar to Iraq, have affected religious heritage where civil wars and ethnic conflict have destroyed the mosques, churches, and temples.

War is a negative factor in Iraq. Thus, there is a necessity to address cultural heritage values from the point of view of the people and government. Terrorist groups have been a critical player in the deliberate destruction of religious places, such as the Taliban destruction of the Buddhas of Bamiyan in Afghanistan. In contrast, the same story has been repeated in Syria by the Islamic States terrorists in the temples of Palmyra (Newson and Young 2018). The Middle East region is featured various religions, including Islam, Judaism, Christianity, and other faiths, sects, and denominations all together have enriched the archaeological circumstance of the countries, especially Iraq and Syria. Therefore, archaeological sites and cultural heritage are at the heart of the conflicts (Seyfi and Hall 2021). Notably, the Gulf Wars have harmed Iraq's cultural heritage, internal insecurities, and civil wars, especially the rise of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria 2014 (Rush 2010). Increasing attention has been paid to collateral damage during

the war. The Iraqi National Museum in Baghdad was looted, and the media and the public have ignored cultural property protection (CPP).

Furthermore, the ongoing looting of archaeological sites in Iraq has been due to sustained security and unrest (Stone 2011). Due to the severity of the situation and extent of looting at archaeological sites in Iraq, it has been difficult even to document as the Iraqi State Board of Antiquities is limited (Stone 2011). Considering the circumstance in Iraq, terrorist groups target buildings, including mosques, to control areas and cities, besides looting archaeological sites. In the different phases of war and conflicts in Iraq since the 1990s majority of the sites have confronted collateral damage (Stone and Bajjaly 2008). Likewise, as home to many of the oldest and culturally rich archaeological sites, Syria has witnessed damage to much of its heritage (Seyfi and Hall 2021). At a glance, in Syria, 290 locations were affected in the 2011-2014 period, in which 24 were destroyed, 104 severely damaged, and 85 relatively damaged (Karim and Islam 2016).

LACK OF LEGAL PROTECTION AND LEGISLATION AS THE PROTECTING FACTORS IN LOSING ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES AND HERITAGE IN IRAQ AND SYRIA

The main principle for protecting archaeological sites and cultural heritage in many countries worldwide depends on the administrative and legislative frameworks regulating the conservation process from excavation to preservation. A legislative framework is required for protecting the sites and heritage from any common threats and risks, either man-made or natural. It is crucial to remember that the surviving remains of the past are finite and vulnerable. However, if the archaeological sites and heritage are destroyed or their authenticity is compromised, they cannot be reinstated (La Torre 1997). In line with this, preservation is all actions that are directly or indirectly aimed at preventing the perpetuation of heritage assets, such as protective legislation, land-use planning, and the creation of positive attitudes and educational programs that serve to provide the context for management activities and deflect the impact of widespread menaces (Darvill and Antonio 2014). Considering the protection of archaeological sites and heritage, there are various legal aspects and strategies, including legal architecture, administrative environment, threats to sites, conditions of the remains, number of tourists, and available resources (La Torre 1997). In many countries, laws are enforced to protect the sites, buildings, and heritage (Toniolo *et al.* 2015). The primary purpose of enforcing laws was to protect pedestrians, but eventually, it protected the buildings. Indeed, legislative authorities and laws can protect archaeological sites, heritage, and artifacts lost during wars and looted, such as in the case of Iraq (Stone 2011).

While dealing with the legislative framework for cultural heritage, an essential question is asked by Stone and Bajjaly (2008): Why, after millennia of human conflict, has the protection of the cultural heritage did not get better? Can it get better? As far as national identity, state sovereignty and political advantage are associated with cultural heritage; thus, avoiding 'collateral damage' is complex, and only law can assure it.

The only approach to assure the survival of archaeological sites and heritage is to devise and employ ways and strategies of caring for them, which avoid their depletion. The legal protection is not just necessary for the discovered sites and heritage but for the unexcavated

ancient artifacts and sites that have cultural significance and have not yet been discovered and damaged. Everything in archaeology has its specific value, including cultural, aesthetic, educational, and religious; therefore, the archaeological sites and heritage are valuable to different segments of society for the mentioned reasons (La Torre 1997). Bearing in mind that enforced national laws alongside international law can prevent illegal trading of antiquities because many wealthy individuals desire to possess antiquities as private property. Thus only strong laws can combat illegal trading. This can only be possible if the international community supports combating this trade; through increasing policies, strengthening legislation, and creating public awareness that private ownership of illicit antiquities is a violation of public good (Stone and Bajjaly 2008). Furthermore, the attacks on the cultural property are attacks on people, identities, nations, and states (Turku 2018).

DESTRUCTION OF CULTURAL HERITAGE AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES IN IRAQ AND SYRIA

To assure sustainability of archaeological sites and cultural heritage, the legal architecture and management policy for archaeology are to be incorporated as main principles for conservation of nonrenewable sources in the long term (La Torre 1997). The preservation of cultural diversity is a recognized human right, and states are responsible for safeguarding cultural heritage (Turku 2018). From a glance, the deliberate show and display of religious and cultural sites, buildings, monuments, and ancient artifacts by ISIS have again shown the importance of protecting cultural property for people and governments (Arimatsu and Choudhury 2015). As already noted, legal principles for protecting archaeological sites and cultural heritage should also aim at educating the locals and all stakeholders to enforce the preservation and conservation of the assets (Comer 2003). In essence, a highly desirable objective related to conflict is preventing it first and, if not possible, then protecting all heritage in times of conflict to prevent any deliberate or collateral damage (Newson and Young 2018). The legislative framework can define the basis for protecting, preserving, and conserving archaeological sites, artifacts, and cultural heritage. There is a crucial motive behind enforcing a legal monetary system that can protect archaeological sites and avoid selling antiquities. Regulating archaeological sites, cultural heritage, and all artifacts should be under specific laws, as protecting and safeguarding are assured because a legal foundation can be diverse. It can even repatriate claims for cultural heritage that a country has lost during wars or conflicts (Kono 2010).

From this end, codification for the protection of the cultural heritage is crucial, which began under the auspices of the League of Nations and fell after 1945 to UNESCO.

A further developed means is the provisions of the Convention signed in The Hague on 14 May 1954 regarding the protection of cultural property in the event of armed conflict and the regulations for its execution and the related Protocol (Toman 2018).

Besides the UNESCO Convention, the Hague Convention specifies a Blue Shield as the symbol for making cultural sites to protect them from attack in the armed conflict. Thus, the International Committee of the Blue Shield (ICBS) should have been the coordinating body for identifying and protecting the cultural heritage in Iraq (Stone and Bajjaly 2008). Aligned with this, UNESCO adopted the Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import,

Export, and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property for the sake of preventing trafficking of cultural and artifact goods from the sources nation (country of origin) to the rich market nations (destination countries) (Hoffman 2006). The UNIDROIT Convention on the International Return of Stolen or Illegally Exported Cultural Objects and the other Conventions aim to form a required legal regime to protect moveable and immovable cultural property (Hoffman 2006).

There is a need for a focused and sustained protection policy based on the law since archaeological sites throughout Iraq, and Mesopotamian history in the country, particularly in the South, is hit the hardest (Stone 2011). On a broad base, Iraq and Syria need to consider combining both international and national cultural heritage protection since the region has global importance in global heritage history (Cuno and Weiss 2020). The destruction made to the Iraqi and Syrian cultural heritage and archaeological sites is due to fighting and conflict. The so-called 'collateral damage' is similar to that in ex-Yugoslavia and other countries, as purposeful destruction, plunder, and looting are elements of the planned destruction of a country's civilization (Stone and Bajjaly 2008). Whistle, collateral damage is not the only threat after the military operations and hostilities in Iraq, but the civil disorder and ensuring looting and destruction of museums, monuments, and sites (Hoffman 2006). In Iraq and Syria, deliberate and systematic destruction of cultural properties of the pre-Islamic period, including artifacts of Sumerian, Akkadian, Babylonian, Assyrian, Arab Art, and Ur, have been affected by the phases of wars and conflicts (Hoffman 2006). They are considering the Islamic State attacks and destruction of cultural property, including looting and trafficking of antiquities since ISIS took control of large areas of Iraq and Syria in 2014. It is vital to recall that ISIS targeted cultural property to dominate, break and erase the region's history and destroy civilization (Turku 2018). The ISIS attacks against cultural heritage and property in the region are used as weapons of war, which has gone far more than expected, as ISIS even started illegal excavations (Arimatsu and Choudhury 2018).

At a glance, many factors influence the protection of cultural heritage. Prioritizing cultural heritage in conflict times must be engulfed in military planning as top priority agenda for decision-makers, not the last thing (Stone and Bajjaly 2008). Unfortunately, collateral damage to archaeological sites is not restricted to Babylon and Ur. At the same time, due to multi-threats, UNESCO inscribed the ancient city of Samarra in 2007 on the World Heritage list and World Heritage in Danger List. So far, Iraq's cultural heritage law and cultural heritage policy are underdeveloped. That is why the protection of cultural heritage is not a common issue in practice and theory. At the same time, the core legal problem in the case of devastating the Iraqi cultural heritage is asserting whether just the occupying military forces are responsible for the rest of the crises and challenges (Hoffman 2006). Likewise, prior to the Second Gulf War, the cultural property has been illegally excavated from the archaeological site, which endangers the increase of illegal trade and smuggling of the items outside Iraq (Woudenberg and Lijnzaad 2010) as ISIS has made trafficking and looting antiquities in Iraq and Syria a source of finance and making a profit.

Likewise, the main objective of ISIS in demolishing cultural heritage in Iraq and Syria is to destroy the multicultural rich history of the countries. Furthermore, the attacks aim to undermine national identity and erase it. More importantly, ISIS has purposefully wanted to destroy the traces of religious existence and destroyed the Muslim, Christian, and Jewish sites

and shrines, including the burial place of Prophet Jonah in Mosul. The Tomb of Jonah symbolized tolerance and shared traditions (Turku 2018). Based on the existing literature, deliberate destruction is referred to as place-based destruction, a deliberate tactic for attacking the enemies and getting territorial control, and displaced ideology of ISIS (Shahab 2021). It is time for governments in Iraq and Syria to consider the application of 1970 UNESCO to comply with the Convention for seizing cultural property stolen and ensure protection and prevent the destruction of cultural goods and heritage. Besides the request for the return or repatriation of cultural property in the post-conflict era. In discussing the protection of culturally significant property during conflict and wars, a question is who safeguards the content of The Hague Convention and the 1970 UNESCO? In addition, the legal regime of public or private ownership under domestic legislation for the protection of cultural property is governed by the rules laid down in the aforesaid international agreements and conventions. That is to say that the legal foundation for cultural heritage and archaeological prosperity seems reliable if it is built on International Art Law (Hoffman 2006). To this end, concerning Iraq and Syria and preventing what may come next as a threat of war or conflict, we need to remember that ISIS has used cultural property as part of its warfare in Syria and Iraq (Turku 2018).

CONCLUSION

Considering the deliberate destructions made against cultural heritage and archaeological sites in Iraq and Syria, it is vital to consider the role of government, legal authorities, laws, and all stakeholders involved in assuring better protection. As Stone and Bajjaly (2008) emphasized, the government must take 'collateral damage seriously. In Iraq and Syria, the deliberate destruction of cultural heritage and archaeological sites has caused significant damage to human civilization in the region. Therefore, increased cooperation between the cultural heritage community and law enforcement agencies is required for protecting cultural heritage in Iraq and Syria.

At this point, UNESCO's Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, adopted on 16 November 1972, emphasized the role of state governments in protecting cultural heritage by providing full support to protect cultural heritage from dangers caused by natural disasters and terrorist attacks (2017). Regarding cultural heritage protection, Iraq and Syria need international support, especially from international organizations such as UNESCO.

In the light of legal concerns, governments in Iraq and Syria should consider deliberate vandalism a war crime that can be dealt with based on laws and regulations associated with cultural heritage protection. As terrorist groups such as ISIS target cultural property to dominate, break and erase the 'others', such attacks can be prevented based on Iraq and Syria's current and past experiences (Turku 2018). Specific actions have supported archaeology protection, including July 2003 EU Regulation No. 1210/2003, which prohibited import, export, or dealing in Iraqi cultural property and archaeological, historical, cultural, rare scientific, and religious artifacts (unless exported prior to 1990). There are limited actions against illegal export and prohibited the trade of artifacts and archeological property, such as in December 2013, the UN Resolution 2199, and the Council adopted Decision 2013/760/CFSP and Regulation (EU) No.

1332/2013. Thus, altogether assure prohibiting the import, transfer or export of Syrian cultural property or artifacts of cultural, scientific, artistic or religious heritage (unless exported prior to 9 May).

Similarly, in 2015 the EU Member States Culture Ministers discussed taking relevant measures (Pasikowska 2016). It is important to stress the importance of heritage protection as it contributes to the long-term improvement of heritage management and protection. To acknowledge, heritage serves as a scarce resource (Pollock 2016). Therefore, the protection of cultural heritage and archaeological sites is a prerequisite for protecting the history of the human race. There should be national and global procedures based on the legal foundation to prevent the future destruction of cultural heritage in Iraq and Syria and prevent the tragic destructions that have already occurred in 2003 and 2014 in Iraq and 2011 in Syria. There is a dire need to deploy specific laws and strategic policies to protect cultural heritage from destruction. The legal foundation capacity is enriched by boosting the knowledge and skills of professionals involved in managing cultural heritage. The training initiatives of UNESCO and the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) since 2013 should be sustained to provide more support to professionals in the area of cultural heritage in Iraq and Syria, similar to the other countries in the region and globally.

Unfortunately, governmental and professional capacities for preserving cultural heritage during crises are still poor in Iraq and Syria. Another serious issue is the importance of cultural heritage in the eyes of citizens, as the public has a crucial role in protecting cultural heritage. Based on the frequent experiences in Iraq and Syria, most communities are less effective during conflicts and wars. It is essential to note the role of arm forces and military personnel responsible for abiding by the rules of LOAC and adopting best practices for protecting cultural property in armed conflicts (O'Keefe *et al.* 2016). In many countries worldwide, especially in Europe, heritage protection is an important component of city planning and land use. It is important to consider archaeology and heritage in policy-making and plan to ensure archeological and cultural heritage protection. Public support is vital for protecting heritage and creating an effective heritage protection system based on a fair balance between protecting critical and enabling appropriate change (CMS 2007).

COMPLIANCE WITH ETHICAL STANDARDS

Acknowledgments:

Not applicable.

Funding:

Not applicable.

Statement of human rights:

This article does not contain any studies with human participants performed by any authors.

Statement on the welfare of animals:

This article does not contain any studies with animals performed by any authors.

Informed consent:

Not applicable.

REFERENCES

1. Agnew, N., Janet B. 2003. "Of the past, for the Future: Integrating Archaeology and Conservation, the Conservation theme of the 5th World Archaeological Congress". Washington, USA: the Getty Conservation Institute.
2. Arimatsu, L., Choudhury, M. 2015. "Protecting Cultural Property in Non-International Armed Conflicts: Syria and Iraq". *International Law Studies* 91 (1):19.
3. Curry, A. 2015. "Shocking destruction in the Syrian city of Palmyra is part of the militant group's ongoing campaign against archaeology, National Geography". Accessed 3 February 2022. <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/history/article/150901-isis-destruction-looting-ancient-sites-iraq-syria-archaeology>
4. Darvill, T., Fernandes, A. B. 2014. "Open-Air Rock-Art Conservation and Management: State of the Art and Future Perspective". London: Routledge
5. De La Torre, M. 1997. "The Conservation of Archaeological Sites in the Mediterranean Region: An international conference". Los Angeles USA: The Getty Conservation Institute.
6. DCMS. 2007. "Heritage protection for the 21st century". The Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport and the Minister for Culture, Welsh Language and Sport: Welsh Assembly Government.
7. Higgin, N. 2020. "The Protection of Cultural Heritage during Armed Conflict". New York, USA: Routledge.
8. Hoffman, T. B. 2006. "Art and Cultural Heritage: Law, Policy and Practice". New York, USA: Cambridge University Press.
9. International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Adopted and opened for signature, ratification and accession by General Assembly resolution 2200A (XXI) of 16 December 1966 entry into force 3 January 1976, in accordance with article 27.
10. International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; Adopted and opened for signature, ratification and accession by General Assembly resolution 2200A (XXI) of 16 December 1966, entry into force 23 March 1976, in accordance with Article 49.
11. Karim, S., Nazmul Md. 2016. "Syrian crisis: Geopolitics and implications." *BISS Journal* 37(2): 107-132
12. Kono, T. 2010. "The Impact of Uniform Laws on the Protection of Cultural Heritage and the Protection of Cultural Heritage and the Preservation of Cultural Heritage in the 21st Century" Leiden, Netherlands: Brill Publisher.
13. Newson, P., Young, R. 2018. "Post-Conflict Archaeology and Cultural Heritage: Rebuilding Knowledge". New York, USA: Routledge.
14. Niglia, A., Al Sabaileh, A., Hammad, A. 2017. "Countering Terrorism, Preventing Radicalization and Protecting Cultural Heritage". Washington, USA: IOS Press.
15. O'Keefe, R., Peron, C., Musayev, T., Ferrari, G. 2016. "Protection of Cultural Property, Military Manual". Sanremo, Italy: United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization.
16. Pasikowska, S. 2016. "Protection of Cultural Heritage in Armed Conflicts". European Parliament Briefing.

17. Pollock, S. 2016. "Archaeology and contemporary warfare". *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 45:215–31.
18. Red Cross, 2010. "Protection of cultural property in the event of armed conflict, International Committee of the Red Cross". Accessed 3 February 2022. <https://www.icrc.org/en/document/protection-cultural-property-armed-conflict>.
19. Rush, L. 2010. "Archaeology, Cultural Property, and the Military". Rochester, New York: Boydell & Brewer Press.
20. Seyfi, S., Michael, H. 2021. "Cultural and Heritage Tourism in the Middle East and North Africa; complexities, management, and practices". New York USA: Routledge.
21. Shahab, S. 2021. "Impacts and implications of violence against cultural heritage in Syria". Accessed 7 February 2022. <https://www.ids.ac.uk/opinions/impacts-and-implications-of-violence-against-cultural-heritage-in-syria>
22. Sullivan, S., Mackay, R. 2012. "Archaeological Sites: Conservation and Management". Los Angeles USA: The Getty Conservation Institute.
23. Stone, G. P., Bajjaly, J. F. 2008. "The Destruction of Cultural Heritage in Iraq". Woodbridge, UK: Boydell Press.
24. Stone, G. P. 2011. "Cultural Heritage, Ethics and the Military, the International Center for Cultural and Heritage Studies". Woodbridge: BOYDELL Press.
25. Teutonico, J. 2002. "Management Planning for Archaeological Sites: An International Workshop". Los Angeles, USA Getty Conservation Institute.
26. Toman, J. 2018. "Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict". London: Routledge.
27. Toniolo, L., Boriani, M., Guidi, G. eds. 2015. "Built Heritage: Monitoring Conservation Management". Cham, Switzerland: Springer.
28. Turku, H. 2017. "The Destruction of Cultural Property as a Weapon of War: ISIS in Syria and Iraq". Washington, USA: Palgrave Macmillan.
29. Turku, H. 2018. "The Destruction of Cultural Property as a Weapon of War: ISIS in Syria and Iraq". Washington, USA: Palgrave Macmillan.
30. United Nations. 1966. International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights. Accessed 3 February 2022, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/cescr.aspx>
31. Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) 1948 Paris
32. Weiss, G. T., Connelly, N. 2020. "Cultural Heritage Under Siege: Laying the Foundation for a Legal and Political Framework to Protect Cultural Heritage at Risk in Zones of Armed Conflict". Los Angeles: J Paul Getty Trust.
33. Woudenberg, N., Liesbeth L. 2010. Protecting Cultural Property in Armed Conflict: An Insight into the 1999". Leiden, Netherlands: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers.

Copyright © 2022 The author/s
This work is licensed under a CC-BY 3.0 license
(*) Corresponding Author
Peer review method: Double-blind
Received: 21.02.2022
Accepted: 10.03.2022
Published: 14.06.2022
Review article
DOI: <https://www.doi.org/10.47305/JLIA2282293dj>

How to cite:

Djikanovic, Danilo. 2022. "THE UNITED NATIONS AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: UNDP IN THE FIGHT AGAINST POVERTY IN MONTENEGRO". Journal of Liberty and International Affairs 8 (2):293-306. <https://e-jlia.com/index.php/jlia/article/view/613>.



THE UNITED NATIONS AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: UNDP IN THE FIGHT AGAINST POVERTY IN MONTENEGRO

Danilo Djikanovic^{1*}

¹ECPD UPEACE - Podgorica, Montenegro  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7011-1967> ✉ danilodjikanovic01@gmail.com

Abstract: *The paper analyzed the challenges of poverty in Montenegro. It provided an overview of the structure and scope of UN action in Montenegro and general sustainable development policies and their national implementation. The objective was to research the contributions of the UN system to the sustainable development of Montenegro while focusing on the role of the UNDP in eradicating poverty. The methodology consisted of the literature overview and the case scenario analysis of integrated social protection and employment policies. In addition, secondary data analysis has been employed to complement the research findings. The paper has identified the national socio-economic situation and the contributions of the UNDP in eradicating poverty through the design and implementation of integrative policies. The research proved the importance of the UNDP in fighting poverty in Montenegro and the effective role of the UN in achieving sustainable development.*

Keywords: *Social Protection; Employment; Poverty; Sustainable Development; UN; UNDP; Activate*

INTRODUCTION

International organizations play a significant role in fostering national development. In Montenegro, the United Nations system has a decades-long presence, focusing on various aspects of social and economic development. The focus has changed over time and, in the present, plays a crucial role in reducing poverty. The contribution in this part has been increased due to the emerging needs caused by the coronavirus pandemic. The new crisis has burdened the social protection system and further slowed the effectiveness of national efforts to reduce unemployment. For these reasons, the UN Country Team in Montenegro has implemented the program 'Activate! Integrated Social Protection and Employment to Accelerate Progress for Young People'.

The research aims to prove the contribution of the UN to the sustainable development of Montenegro and focuses on the role of the UNDP in the fight against poverty. The research methodology includes qualitative analysis based on literature review and quantitative analysis based on secondary data. In addition, research is based on case scenario analysis, specifically on the impact assessment of the program 'Activate!' on poverty reduction. The literature used for the research focuses on sustainable development while also including UNCT publications,

analyses, research, and reports. Additional sources include statistical databases created by UN agencies and state bodies.

The research results prove the significant contributions of the UNDP in the fight against poverty and the UN Family in Montenegro to its sustainable socio-economic development. In the following, the research is displayed in three parts:

- 1) History, role, and structure of the UN system in Montenegro;
- 2) UNDP activities in Montenegro and its fight against poverty;
- 3) Conclusions based on the collected evidence.

THE UNITED NATIONS IN MONTENEGRO

History and Structure of the UN in Montenegro

As an independent state, the Republic of Montenegro became the 192nd member of the United Nations system on 28 June 2006. However, the United Nations' presence in Montenegro began earlier. On 26 June 1945, Democratic Federal Yugoslavia signed the Charter of the United Nations, which started the formation of Montenegro according to the UN values. These multilateral relations were maintained during the existence of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The early activities of the UN on the territory of Montenegro had a predominantly humanitarian and security focus. Priority was given to ensuring peace and stability and socio-economic development, which was regressed by the fight against fascism in WW II.

Following the dissolution of the SFR Yugoslavia amid the Yugoslav wars in 1992, Montenegro continued its multilateral relations with the United Nations system through its membership in the state union of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, which consisted of Serbia and Montenegro. However, the newly established republic was not recognized by the United Nations as a continuation of the previous union. However, it was recognized as a successor separately, along with Slovenia, Croatia, Macedonia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Nevertheless, the United Nations Secretariat allowed the mission of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to continue operating by accrediting representatives of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to take part in the diplomatic mission. Only after the change of government in 2000, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia re-applied for UN membership.

During and after the Yugoslav wars of the 1990s, the UN presence in Montenegro continued its humanitarian character caused by mass migrations in the Balkans. In this regard, the International Organization for Migration has played a significant role in achieving the security of citizens from warring states. Their work was complemented by UNICEF and UNHCR, which in the following years opened offices in Montenegro and thus provided basic living conditions for children and refugees from neighboring Yugoslav states.

With the end of the wars in the region, the work of other United Nations organizations in Montenegro began. The presence of the UNIDO agency has been established, with a regional office in Vienna and the presence of other UN organizations, such as the WHO, UNDP, UNESCO, and UNOPS.

Today, the UN Family in Montenegro consists of 15 UN organizations - five resident and ten regionally-based UN agencies, including the following:

- Food and Agriculture Organization
- International Atomic Energy Agency
- International Labour Organization
- International Organization for Migration
- United Nations Environment Programme
- UN Women
- United Nations Development Programme
- UN Economic Commission for Europe
- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
- United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
- United Nations Children's Fund
- United Nations Industrial Development Organization
- United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
- United Nations Office for Project Services
- World Health Organization

By relying on the statements of the UNCO in Montenegro (2022), it is evident that the Resident Coordinator Office coordinates the work of the UN Family in Montenegro. At the same time, its national program is steered by the Joint Country Steering Committee, co-chaired by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and the UN Resident Coordinator. The body is composed of government ministers and the heads of all the resident UN organizations in Montenegro.

The Role and Scope of Functions of UN Agencies in Montenegro

The UN Country Team in Montenegro, through its activities in the areas of human rights and sustainable development, provides support for achieving the 17 interconnected Sustainable Development Goals and enables the realization of national priorities through the application of cutting-edge knowledge and necessary expertise.

The UN Country Team uses the advantages of various UN organizations active in the country to provide the support that meets national needs. By working together, the UN Country Team improves the population's living conditions in the target country, including the most vulnerable, disadvantaged, and those at risk of social exclusion.

Through strong collaboration with the national government, private businesses, NGOs, civil society, and academia, the UN Country Team is implementing the Integrated UN Programme 2017-2021, which aims to accelerate progress and achieve national priorities in line with the process of EU integrations and the 2030 Agenda.

The main contributions are reflected through consulting services, specialized expertise, and access to best practices to improve national development in four strategic Result Areas: Democratic Governance, Economic Governance, Social Inclusion, and Environmental Sustainability. These are also milestones following the current UN country program 2017-2021.

In the democratic governance part, the objective is to develop a "people-centered, accountable, transparent and effective judiciary, while parliament, public administration, and

independent institutions need to ensure security, equal access to justice, and quality services to all people" (UNCT 2020c, 18). This includes the following goals:

- 1) Capacity, efficiency, and transparency of judiciary improved;
- 2) Enhanced citizens' and civil society participation in the creation of policies and legislation;
- 3) Enhanced capacity of the public administration, law enforcement, and independent institutions to ensure security and deliver inclusive people-centered services;
- 4) Improved legislation and policies to meet EU *acquis* requirements and international obligations of Montenegro, including SDGs (UNCT 2020c, 18).

In terms of environmental sustainability, the objective is to achieve sustainable management of cultural and natural resources, as well as to respond more strongly to climate change, but also to reduce the risk of disasters. Key goals in this Result Area include:

- 1) Climate change and environmental targets integrated into national policies and strategies;
- 2) Enhanced energy efficiency and reduction of CO₂ emissions enabled in specific sectors;
- 3) Improved management and treatment of chemicals and all wastes;
- 4) Capacities for resilience to disasters increased (UNCT 2020c, 28).

Further, the objective related to social inclusion implies that by 2021 the population of Montenegro will have better access to a quality system of education, health, protection, and work. These developments are ensured through respect for equality and inclusiveness, the principle of 'leaving no one behind'. Efforts in this area are focused on achieving the following goals:

- 1) Enhanced multisector cooperation, social dialogue, and the capacity of relevant public institutions to provide adequate support and services;
- 2) Social welfare and social protection system have an enhanced capacity for oversight of planning, provision, and coordination of social protection services;
- 3) Improved social and institutional responsiveness towards anti-discrimination and gender equality policies for equal opportunities for women and public awareness of existing violence;
- 4) Innovative solutions are introduced for active participation and empowerment of youth, including those affected by poverty, adversity, and exclusion (UNCT 2020c, 36).

Economic governance takes an important part of the UN program in Montenegro, which becomes more demanding with gradual national development as Montenegro approaches the status of a developed country; economic governance requires greater efforts, including international expertise and collaboration of various stakeholders. By 2021, the objective is to establish an institutional and regulatory framework for sustainable and inclusive economic growth based on innovation, entrepreneurship, and competitiveness (UNCT 2020c, 43).

Work in this Result Area strives towards the following key achievements:

- 1) National policies foster a good business environment and sustainable private sector growth towards increasing competitiveness of the economy;

- 2) National institutions have improved capacities to develop, implement and monitor policies that help generate jobs and move to the formal economy (UNCT 2020c, 43).

The work is coordinated by the Joint Steering Committee, ensuring national ownership and greater involvement of state bodies in the Integrated UN Programme.

Mutual responsibility for the achieved results is ensured and primarily shared by the Government of Montenegro and the United Nations Country Team. Coordination is carried out based on a common mechanism, which ensures collaboration in strategic orientations and decision-making and monitors the implementation of the Integrated UN Programme (UNCT 2016, 38).

The UN Sustainable Development Policies in Montenegro

The UN-specific country programs are derived from the Cooperation Framework. The framework begins and ends with an analysis of the national development landscape and SDG priorities. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), also known as the Global Goals, were adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015 as a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity by 2030 (UN 2015, 3). The 17 SDGs are perceived as correlated, which is the underlying reason for advocating a balance between social, economic, and environmental sustainability.

The central promise of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is to 'leave no one behind', through which countries seek to advance progress for the most disadvantaged individuals and social groups. In achieving this target, it is needed to include all relevant stakeholders and impose all the available resources, from creativity and know-how to technology and financial resources (UN 2015, 3).

The five UN programming principles of the human rights-based approach, gender equality, environmental sustainability, capacity development, and results-based management are applied across the UN work in Montenegro. With strong national ownership and direct government oversight and participation exercised through the Joint Country Steering Committee and the four Results Groups, the main thrust of the program is implemented by building national capacities at all levels, based on strategic entry points where the UN agencies have particular competencies and comparative advantages (UNCT 2016, 2).

THE UNDP IN MONTENEGRO

Strategical Framework of the UNDP

United Nations Development Programme acts as the leading UN development agency by implementing the SDGs in 170 countries and territories. The approach used is to enhance national progress through the design of integrated solutions. This means focusing on interconnected systemic causes to build responses that address the roots of the challenges.

In order to properly respond to the contextual challenges of the different countries in which UNDP operates, the UNDP Strategic Plan 2022-2025 has been designed. To classify diverse challenges, developments are perceived through three general settings:

- 1) Eradicating poverty;
- 2) Structural transformations;
- 3) Building resilience.

Integrated responses to development are known as 'signature solutions', against which resources and expertise are aligned to make a real impact (UNDP 2021, 9). These responses include the following:

- 1) Keeping people out of poverty;
- 2) Governance for peaceful, just, and inclusive societies;
- 3) Crisis prevention and increased resilience;
- 4) Environment: nature-based solutions for development;
- 5) Clean, affordable energy;
- 6) Women's empowerment and gender equality (UNDP 2021, 6).

Each of the listed solutions represents a mixture of policy recommendations, financial resources, technical support, and program design. Although all of the solutions focus on sustainable development, it is inevitable to enforce them all to achieve the SDGs truly.

The Areas of UNDP Activity in Montenegro

Social Inclusion

According to UNCT (2021), social exclusion in Montenegro predominantly affects vulnerable groups such as the poor and deprived, the long term unemployed, elderly, persons with disabilities, refugees and internally displaced persons, HIV/AIDS affected, Roma and Egyptian minorities, etc. Combating poverty and social exclusion takes more effective and adequate targeting of health, employment, and social services (UNCT 2021a, 40). One of the goals is to advance social inclusion processes, which is done through improved institutional responsiveness and service for the most vulnerable, so all men and women can enjoy a quality life and reach their full potential. By doing this, the UNDP is supporting Montenegro in overcoming social exclusion, poverty, and gender inequality, thus accelerating the country's EU integration agenda (UNCT 2019b, 19).

Democratic Governance

The European integration of Montenegro requires the country to go through fundamental reforms, including the improved democratization of society and upholding of the rule of law. An array of challenges is looming, while the lingering effects of the global financial downturn strain Montenegro's public administration capacities (UNCT 2020a, 2). The goal of overcoming the challenges mentioned above is to advance the democratization of

society. This is done by strengthening the institutions' rule of law, transparency, and accountability, including enhancing civil participation in governance. Achieving such a complex goal requires strong collaboration with the government, a key player in promoting good governance and participatory democracy, and fostering a democratic society that fully respects and protects human rights.

Economy and Environment

More than 60 percent of people living in poverty reside in the country's north, where unemployment is double that of central and southern regions. This even though the north is home to 100 percent of the country's hydroelectric potential, 67 percent of cultivable land, 71 percent of forests, 70 percent of cattle, all of the country's known lead, zinc, and coal reserves, and significant potential for year-around sustainable tourism, which already accounts for 17 percent of the region's GDP (UNCT 2019a, 6).

For these reasons, integrating economic and environmental protection policies is needed to achieve sustainable development. This objective requires several approaches, including advancing market transformation toward low emissions, a resource-efficient economy, and resilient ecosystems and communities. The intention is to create green jobs, generate and conserve income, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions and dependence on energy imports (UNCT 2016, 17).

Gender Equality

In gender equality, the efforts are focused on the equality of women and men to fulfill human rights and human development itself. The promotion of gender equality is central to the mandate of UNDP and intrinsic to its development approach. This includes advocating for equal rights, combating discriminatory practices, and challenging the stereotypes that affect inequalities (UNDP 2019, 7). The UNDP's goal in this Result Area is to support the country to fulfill its commitments toward achieving gender equality and women's empowerment in the Agenda 2030 while mainstreaming gender equality into every aspect of its work and leading by example (UNDP 2019, 8).

Case Scenario: Integrated Social Protection and Employment Policies

As part of the research methodology, a case scenario was used to identify the UNDP's contributions to the fight against poverty in Montenegro. The selected case is based on a program coordinated by the UNDP but jointly implemented by the UN agencies in Montenegro, in cooperation with national partners: the Ministry of Finance and Social Welfare, the Ministry of Economic Development, and the Employment Bureau, social work centers and civil society organizations (RCO Montenegro, 2021). The core information on the joint program is provided in Table 1.

Table 1: The Joint UN Programme ‘Activate!’ (Source: UNCT 2021)

Program	Activate! Integrated Social Protection and Employment to Accelerate Progress for Young People
Aim	The program aims to enhance the capacities of the social protection system to better serve people in need
Focus	Eradicate poverty in all its forms and dimensions
Signature Solutions	Keeping people out of poverty

The Programme Description

The joint UN project ‘Activate!’ is based on two innovative components: i) simulations of social policies that enable the modeling of social protection reforms, and ii) development of human-centered services tailored for users (RCO Montenegro, 2021).

The project aims to enhance the capacities of the social protection system to serve better to people in need. It focuses on youth, children, migrants, and refugees and addresses the root causes of human trafficking while supporting decent work and employability/skills development. Innovation is used as a key change strategy by applying the advanced methodologies of foresight, human-centered design, and policy simulation tools in order to improve targeting, expand coverage, and address the adequacy of social protection, but also activate Montenegro’s youth who are currently not in education, employment or training (NEET) and other vulnerable and marginalized groups through enhanced labor activation (UNDP *et al.* 2020, 2).

Approach

The expectation is that, by 2022, transformative policy tools will be developed, which have the potential to be replicated across policy areas and scaled up by the Government of Montenegro. These tools will simulate policy impact to ensure effective social protection, which could reduce the poverty rate by three percentage points if there is political commitment. More people, particularly youth, will be reached through labor activation services: these services have been co-designed with the target beneficiaries and therefore address their unique needs. Consequently, previously inactive youth will become contributors to the state budget instead of social assistance recipients (UNDP *et al.* 2020, 3).

Effectiveness

Given that the project is ongoing and results are still being made, there is no final data on the impacts of the UNDP’s policy scenarios in the fight against poverty in Montenegro. However, relevant government officials have publicly expressed their professional opinions on the joint UN action achieved the so-far implemented activities and intermediate results.

Ms. Marija Stajovic, Director General for Social Policy and Child Protection at the Ministry of Finance and Social Protection, pointed out that “social policy simulations significantly help the

ministry in expanding the social protection system in order to reduce poverty and adjust services to the needs of users" (RCO 2021, 1).

Ms. Jevrosima Pejovic, Head of the Directorate for Labor and Employment at the Ministry of Economic Development, reinforces this claim by indicating that "improving the skills and qualifications of young people, especially those in vulnerable groups, are key to reducing their dependence on social assistance and also to their activation in the labor market" (RCO 2021, 1). Since 2017, poverty, as measured by the upper-middle-income poverty rate, has decreased from 19.4% to 18.1%. Montenegro entered 2020 with record-high employment and average GDP growth of 4 percent in the previous five years (UNCT 2020d, 6). However, in 2020, the project was expanded to address the ongoing crises caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.

The pandemic disturbed the socio-economic stability in the country by increasing unemployment and social protection expenditures. Other economic indicators suffered decreased levels, which deepens the gap between the need and the availability of financial resources to provide social protection. As indicated in Figure 1, Montenegro witnessed a sharp fall in real GDP growth, net exports, gross fixed investment, and consumption in 2020.



Figure 1: Decline in Economic Indicators Due to the Pandemic (Source: UNCT 2021b, 7)

As a result, vulnerable social groups in the country fell deeper into poverty. Therefore, the UNDP strived for action by advocating for a responsible and comprehensive response. By the end of 2021, the UN in Montenegro has placed 7.64 million dollars to support the fight against poverty enhanced by the Covid-19 pandemic.

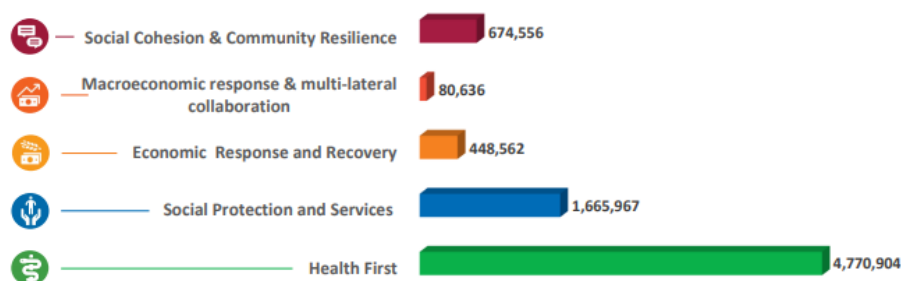


Figure 2: UN Socio-Economic Response to the Covid-19 Pandemic (Source: UNCT 2021b)

Regarding the funds of the program 'Activate!' invested specifically for integrated social protection and employment policies, the UNDP, through a Joint SDG Fund, has placed the following amounts in Montenegro:

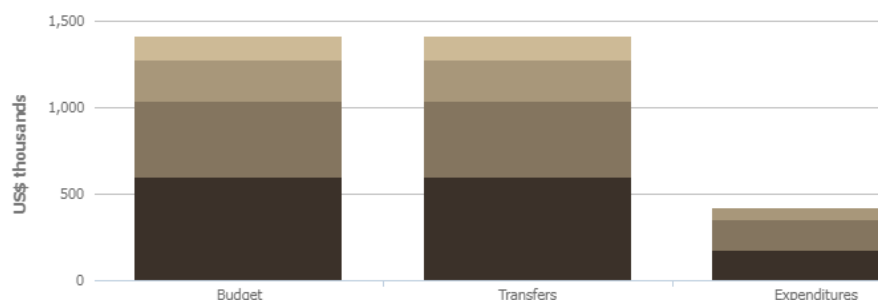


Figure 3: Budget Utilization (Source: MPTF UNDP 2022)

Economic recovery was supported through continuous evidence collection work that enabled situation monitoring and trend analyses throughout the year. Evidence and analyses were used to inform national policies and strategies. A new legislative framework for accelerating the innovation and technological development in the country was adopted, which set key preconditions and enabled the implementation of the government's 'third package of support measures' in support of the businesses to mitigate the negative impact of the Covid-19.

As a part of the efforts to decrease unemployment, the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare was provided technical assistance in creating a set of internal procedures for the work of the Employment Agency of Montenegro, required to implement laws on mediation and unemployment rights. Capacities within the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare and Montenegrin Employers Federation were strengthened through training, including statistical software for Labour Market Analysis and Measuring Skills Mismatches.

Innovative tools such as individualized service delivery were introduced in employment and social sectors, effectively addressing labor activation challenges (UNCT 2020d, 21). Within the initiative to improve access to employment and enhanced social inclusion through improved local infrastructure in the less developed areas of Montenegro, the UNDP has supported 21 small and medium-sized enterprises and 10 vocational education training providers to ensure that 68 people are trained and 45 jobs created. Support to 47 grant beneficiaries from 4 different grant schemes resulted in the maintenance of the business continuity of SMEs, enabling more than 50 individuals to save their jobs (UNCT 2020d, 25).

Inclusive Labour Market Solutions enabled a mentoring scheme for the unemployed who established their businesses through financial support. This has helped reduce vulnerability on two levels: it supported 65 unemployed women, men, and young people to start and run their businesses, and it contributed to the sustainability of small, new businesses, which were vulnerable to the impacts of the pandemic. Labor market activation of the most vulnerable was additionally boosted by developing software to enable interoperability/automatic data exchange between Employment Agency and Social Welfare Information System (UNCT 2020d, 27).

CONCLUSION

Based on the collected evidence, it can be concluded that UNDP significantly contributes to poverty reduction in Montenegro. More generally, the United Nations system in Montenegro contributes to its sustainable development. However, it should be emphasized that not all goals have been achieved. Poverty reduction had a positive trend until 2020, which was interrupted by the emerging crisis caused by the coronavirus pandemic. As a result, there was no reduction in poverty by three percentage points, as predicted; instead, the poverty level increased. However, without the support of UNDP, as well as other UN agencies, Montenegro would not have access to the needed expertise, research, and consulting services, which served as a basis for planning the recovery of the Montenegrin economy and for providing the necessary social protection to its citizens. In addition, the UN Family raised multimillion funds through international foundations and used them to assist Montenegro in its recovery and development. A significant part of the funds was invested in improving social protection and employment policies, which resulted in numerous benefits for Montenegrin institutions and citizens. In this part, the greatest attention was focused on improving the living conditions of vulnerable social groups, such as young people who are not in the status of employment, education, or training. In this way, UNDP fought to reduce the number of social protection beneficiaries while enabling the creation of new jobs and connecting long-term unemployed people with the supply on the labor market.

Fighting poverty and achieving sustainable national development requires long-term planning, investment, and cooperation. In this regard, the United Nations system is one of the most important partner networks in Montenegro. At the same time, through its long-term engagement in social protection and employment, UNDP makes an outstanding contribution to the fight against poverty in Montenegro. By adopting the new UNDP Strategic Plan 2022-2025 and Agenda 2030, UNDP, with its UN Family partners, proves that it will remain committed to its goal until it is achieved.

COMPLIANCE WITH ETHICAL STANDARDS

Acknowledgments:

I am immensely grateful to Professor Ezio Benedetti, who provided vital mentoring support.

Funding:

Not applicable.

Statement of human rights:

This article does not contain any studies with human participants performed by any authors.

Statement on the welfare of animals:

This article does not contain any studies with animals performed by any authors.

Informed consent:

Not applicable.

REFERENCES

1. MPTF, UNDP. 2022. "PSP 2019 Montenegro". NYC: *MPTF*, available at: <https://mptf.undp.org/factsheet/project/00118553> (08 May 2022).
2. RCO Montenegro. 2021. "Strengthening social protection to Activate! the most vulnerable". Podgorica, Montenegro: *UN Montenegro*, available at: <https://montenegro.un.org/index.php/en/133800-strengthening-social-protection-activate-most-vulnerable> (01 July 2021).
3. Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, 25 September 2015, A/RES/70/1, available at: <https://sdgs.un.org/2030agenda>.
4. UNCT. 2016. "Integrated United Nations Programme for Montenegro 2017 – 2021". Podgorica, Montenegro: *Government of Montenegro & the UN in Montenegro*, available at: <https://montenegro.un.org/en/43249-integrated-united-nations-programme-montenegro-2017-2021> (27 September 2016).
5. UNCT. 2019a. "Decent Work Country Programme, Montenegro 2019-2021". Podgorica, Montenegro: *Government of Montenegro & the UN in Montenegro*, available at: <https://montenegro.un.org/en/43244-decent-work-country-programme-montenegro-2019-2021> (08 March 2019).
6. UNCT. 2019b. "Unraveling Connections - EU Accession and the 2030 Agenda". Podgorica, Montenegro: *EU Delegation to Montenegro*, available at: <https://montenegro.un.org/en/43175-unraveling-connections-eu-accession-and-2030-agenda> (25 June 2019).
7. UNCT. 2020a. "Dialogue for the Future (DFF): Info Sheet". Podgorica, Montenegro: *UN Montenegro*, available at: <https://montenegro.un.org/en/45439-dialogue-future-dff-info-sheet> (24 April 2020).
8. UNCT. 2020b. "Report on the Rapid Social Impact Assessment of the COVID-19 outbreak in Montenegro, April–June 2020", Podgorica, Montenegro: *UNCO Montenegro*, available at: <https://montenegro.un.org/en/90471-report-rapid-social-impact-assessment-covid-19-outbreak-montenegro-april-june-2020> (11 September 2020).
9. UNCT. 2020c. "UN Montenegro Progress Report 2019". Podgorica, Montenegro: *UN Montenegro*, available at: <https://montenegro.un.org/en/44049-un-montenegro-progress-report-2019> (25 April 2020).
10. UNCT. 2021a. "UN Common Country Analysis, Montenegro 2021". Podgorica, Montenegro: *UN Montenegro*, available at: <https://montenegro.un.org/en/124464-un-common-country-analysis-montenegro-2021> (12 April 2021).
11. UNCT. 2021b. "UNCT Montenegro 2020 Results Report". Podgorica, Montenegro: *UN Montenegro*, available at: <https://montenegro.un.org/en/124918-unct-montenegro-2020-results-report> (15 April 2021).
12. UNCT. 2022. "The United Nations in Montenegro". Podgorica, Montenegro. *UN Montenegro*, available at: <https://montenegro.un.org/en/about/about-the-un>.
13. UNDP. 2019. "Gender Equality Index for Montenegro". Podgorica, Montenegro: *UN Montenegro*, available at:

https://www.me.undp.org/content/montenegro/en/home/library/womens_empowerment/GEI2019.html (29 January 2020).

14. UNDP, UNICEF, and UNHCR. 2020. "Joint Programme 2020 Annual Progress Report". Podgorica, Montenegro. *UN Montenegro*, available at: <http://mdtf.undp.org/document/download/26610> (15 January 2021)
15. UNDP. 2021. "Strategic Plan 2022-2025". NYC: *UNDP*, available at: <https://www.undp.org/publications/undp-strategic-plan-2022-2025> (2 September 2021).

Copyright © 2022 The author/s
This work is licensed under a CC-BY 3.0 license
(* Corresponding author
Peer review method: Double-blind
Received: 08.03.2022
Accepted: 04.04.2022
Published: 14.06.2022
Review article
DOI: <https://www.doi.org/10.47305/JLIA2282307d>

How to cite:

Dopchie, Robert. 2022. "THE INCREASING INFLUENCE OF EMERGING POWERS IN THE WESTERN BALKANS: A BRIEF ANALYSIS". Journal of Liberty and International Affairs 8 (2):307-20. <https://e-jlia.com/index.php/jlia/article/view/614>.



THE INCREASING INFLUENCE OF EMERGING POWERS IN THE WESTERN BALKANS: A BRIEF ANALYSIS

Robert Dopchie^{1*}

¹University of Liege - Liege, Belgium  <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3234-7749> ✉ robert.dopchie@student.uliege.be

Abstract: *Using four emerging powers as a case study (China, Russia, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey), this paper examined how the current redistribution of power in the contemporary world has affected the Western Balkan region. The objective was to shed light on the ability of the emerging powers to make use of soft power to increase their influence. This paper demonstrated that the growing presence in the Western Balkan region of these emerging powers occurred to the detriment of traditional actors in the region, in particular to the European Union and the United States. While Russia favored political instability in the region to increase its grip, China proposed a new economic project to reach the European market and expand its own norms. As far as Saudi Arabia and Turkey were concerned, both states privileged the use of religious soft power in Muslim-majority countries. The paper concluded that a rapid European response is required today if the EU wants to remain the most influential actor in the Western Balkans.*

Keywords: *Emerging Powers; Western Balkans; Power; Influence; European Union*

INTRODUCTION

While the fall of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) in 1991 led to the end of the bipolar world and the beginning of the American hegemony, the emergence of new powers marked the appearance of multipolar world order. Using the Western Balkans¹ (WB) as a case study, this work examines the consequences of this shift at the global level through the following question: to what extent does the arrival of emerging powers in the WB influence the redistribution of power in the multipolar world? After a theoretical analysis that develops how these powers have emerged, this research further focuses on the influence in the WB of four powers: China, Russia, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey. Whether for historical, political, economic, or cultural reasons, these four powers mentioned above are the most active in the region. Following a short introduction, the research proposes to study these emerging powers through three transversal sub-questions: (a) How do the emerging powers carry out their economic objectives in the WB?; (b) What strategies do the emerging powers extend their political

¹The Western Balkans consists of 6 states: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, and Serbia.

influence in the WB?; and (c) Do the emerging powers threaten the EU's influence in the WB? Finally, it is essential to point out that this work is based on qualitative research and conducted through articles, books, chapters of collective books, reports, and publications of research institutes.

THE EMERGENCE OF NEW POWERS

The fall of the USSR disrupted the world order, and consequently, it marked the end of the bipolar world led by the two superpowers: the USSR and the United States (US). The world then witnessed the triumph of the liberal ideology over communism, and the US became the only world superpower, whether in military, economic, or technological terms (Ikenberry 2008, 15). Nevertheless, following the fall of the USSR, a certain global momentum towards multilateralism emerged, and numerous summits were held to this end (Santander 2009, 14).

Several examples can be highlighted: the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio (1992), the creation of the World Trade Organization (WTO 1995), the Kyoto Protocol (1997), and the Rome Diplomatic Conference for an International Criminal Court (1998). However, when joining these new organizations at the beginning of the XXI century, several emerging countries quickly tried to unify their positions to defend their common claims better (Wintgens and Zacharie 2016, 2). According to Carlos Milani (2011), the emerging powers did not aim directly at "radically transforming the world order (...) but rather demanded the reform of global governance by taking into account the new realities of the international configuration" (p. 60). An emerging power is thus "a country which is questioning its place in the established order and which, consequently, shows political ambition" (Milani 2011, 61). Nevertheless, the new world order's configuration only appeared to be possible after the progressive retreat of the US on the international stage.

In this regard, it should be stressed that the attacks of 11 September 2001 deeply questioned for the first time the military hegemony that the US had enjoyed until then and also marked the end of the North American economic expansion (Dabat and Leal 2019, 101). The US was engaged in what Pierre Mélandri (2007) describes as "degraded multilateralism" (p. 208). This phenomenon is marked by a series of unilateral US military interventions abroad. This was the case in Haiti (1994), Iraq (1998), and Kosovo (1998), which confirms, as Sebastian Santander stresses, that the US sought to distance itself from multilateral organizations and the constraints that these imposed (Santander 2009, 15-16). Consequently, the US progressively isolated itself from international organizations (IOs), which increased during the economic crisis that shook the economy of the US (and the world) in 2008 and 2009. Facing a situation close to what Keynes considered "a liquidity trap and consists of low-interest rate which do not generate significant growth in productive investment nor employment" (Dabat and Leal 2019, 101), the US witnessed the emergence of new powers. This is notably the case of the BRICS countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa), a category proposed in 2001 by Jim O'Neill (Le Monde 2021). Thus, the vacuum of power created by the US retreat progressively left space for the emerging powers to gain power on the international stage. At their request, a series of new IOs and intergovernmental forums were created, among which the establishment of the Group of Twenty (G20) remains the most evocative example. Composed of 19 states and the EU, the G20

seeks to integrate the strongest emerging powers into world politics to rebalance the world order (Vercauteren 2015, 102). Hence, it is very interesting to stress that the four emerging countries that this paper will focus on are all members of the G20, which clearly shows that these states are now worldly recognized as influential countries. Nevertheless, two cleavages emerge from this redistribution of power at the global level: the informal/formal and the multilateralism/bilateralism cleavages (Vercauteren 2015, 103).

The first refers to the idea that through their respective participation in informal forums such as the G20 or specific forums between the BRICS countries, the emerging powers indirectly increase their influence and strengthen their position in formal organizations of global governance such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. The second cleavage refers to the regular attempts by China, and in the wake of several emerging powers, to limit the number of multilateral agreements. Above all, these states are trying to promote bilateral exchanges with their partners to bypass the traditional multilateral bodies of the United Nations (UN). Combined, these two phenomena seem to confirm and even reinforce the importance of emerging countries in the new world order configuration.

However, if these countries play such a strong role in global governance today, their influence is inevitably reflected in the WB region. This section examines the influence of four states in the region: China, Russia, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey. To this end, three transversal topics are examined in the form of questions to assess the impact of their arrival in the WB.

How do the emerging powers carry out their economic objectives in the WB?

This section examines the infrastructures set up by the emerging countries in the WB and analyses the various trade agreements. Finally, it emphasizes the WB states' risks in their relations with these powers. Above all, it is crucial to underline that the WB offers many opportunities for the emerging powers active in the region due to their history, culture, natural resources, and geography. In their relentless race for energy resources, which represent a central aspect for a state to ensure economic growth, the emerging countries must inevitably open up to new markets (Milani 2011, 60). This is particularly true for China, which aims to strengthen its economic cooperation through the 17+1 format. Initiated by China, this forum seeks to bypass the EU institutional framework considered too formal and rigid by Chinese leaders. Several themes are addressed: culture, agriculture and forestry, finance, diplomacy, and finally, energy (Veron 2021). The 17+1 format is the continuation of China's previous political approach to the WB states (2000-2020) since, as Ana Krstinovska highlights (2022), "most of the Chinese donations originally concerned education, health, infrastructure, agriculture, and military equipment (to Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia only)" (p. 232).

However, Russia also aspires to establish its grip on energy sectors such as mining and oil. To this end, according to Sergey Sutyurin *et al.* (2019), Russia has recently invested massively in the WB states through foreign direct investment (FDI), in particular in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro (p. 329). Although the authors of this research note the potential imprecision of the available data, they estimate that the Russian petrochemical giants, Lukoil and Zarubezhneft, benefit from an almost monopoly in these countries (Sutyurin *et al.* 2019, 329). As Stanislav Secieru (2019) adds, although Russian state-controlled Zarubezhneft constantly faces

heavy annual losses, the company shows no intention of withdrawing from the WB, which demonstrates, according to the author, that “mercantilism was disguising Moscow's geopolitical objectives” (p. 3).

As a response to Russia and in order to ensure its influence in the WB, ahead of other emerging competitors, China proposed an evolutionary project spread over 36 years (2013-2049): the ‘One Belt, One Road’ (OBOR) project, later renamed as the ‘Belt and Road Initiative’ (BRI) or the ‘New Silk Road’. Announced with great fanfare in 2013 by Chinese President Xi Jinping, this project refers to the historical importance of the traditional Silk Road, which, according to Xi Jinping, “had proved [during its 2000 years of existence] that countries with differences in race, belief and cultural background can share peace and development as long as they persist in unity and mutual trust, equality and mutual benefit, mutual tolerance and learning from each other, as well as cooperation and win-win outcomes” (Jinping 2013).

Concretely, the BRI is a strategy for the global development of infrastructures between Europe (the port of Piraeus in Athens was bought in 2016 by the Chinese company ‘China Ocean Shipping Company’ (COSCO) and China to secure “access to markets and strategic raw materials [to] counter the effects of post-2008 protectionism and US diplomatic offensives” (Carrai, Defraigne, and Wouters 2020, 15). Further, the BRI also seeks to allow the export of a wide range of products to Beijing, such as raw materials (mining, gas, and coal) or transportation means (cars and airports) (Hackaj 2018, 7). Finally, expanding Chinese norms and standards remains one of China's priorities and gaining privileged access to the European market (Carrai, Defraigne, and Wouters 2020, 15). To this end, the BRI aims to strengthen trade by creating seven corridors, one of which crosses the WB. This is the case of the ‘Balkan Silk Road’ as it is called, a corridor that firstly connects Athens, Skopje, Belgrade, and Budapest, thus promoting trade between the Mediterranean and Central Europe (and so, Western Europe for a second time) (Rencz 2019, 6).

Moreover, while China is investing massively in infrastructure to extend its zone of influence in the WB, this is also the case with Turkey. The attraction of the European market pushes the Turkish authorities to explore new entry points to the EU. To this end, Turkey is financing a highway currently under construction between Sarajevo and Belgrade. This connection is all the more symbolic because of the various wars that the different WB states have undergone at the dawn of the XXI century (Kovacevic 2021). Turkey is also investing in a gas pipeline known as ‘TurkStream’ parallel to the future highway and aims to supply Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Serbia with gas. As far as Serbia is concerned, the authorities have also established a privileged economic partner of Turkey, particularly since the establishment of the Turkey-Serbia High-Level Cooperation Council. Limited to an exchange volume of one million dollars in 2011, the Turkish investments in Serbia reached no less than 1.2 billion euros in 2021, in particular thanks to this Cooperation Council and the free trade agreement between the two parties (Presidency of the Republic of Turkey 2019).

Nevertheless, behind these figures hides another reality; according to Alida Vračić (2016), despite significant investments also coming from the private sector, “the long-promised economic prospects that Turkey pledged to the [WB] region have also not materialized” (p. 6). This situation is similar to China. While the BRI project aims to establish win-win cooperation

through bilateral agreements between China and the other states, not all benefit equally from Chinese investments. The example of Montenegro speaks for itself.

As revealed by the Financial Times, Montenegro, a state in great financial difficulty and unable to pay off its debts to China, officially requested more than one billion euros from the EU on 12 April 2021 (Hopkins 2021). Facing the EU's negative response, the Union reminded Montenegro that the EU was "not repaying the loans they (Montenegro) are taking from third parties", Montenegro is now running the risk of a profound macroeconomic imbalance and dependence on China (Nielsen 2021). Regretting this troubling situation, Florian Bieber and Nikolaos Tzifakis (2019) state that today "[we must] acknowledge that China has not so far advanced any political vision for the (WB) region (...) [and] Beijing has confined itself to the role of an economic partner that seeks new investments and deals" (p. 12).

Finally, Saudi Arabia, just like China, seems to favor bilateral agreements with the WB states, in particular with Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Although most Arab interests in the WB appear to be more political than economic, Saudi Arabia has established a significant arms trade with its Serbian partner. According to data available on the Trading Economics platform, the volume of arms exports from Serbia today amounts to \$2.12 million in 2019, making Serbia the largest arms exporter in the region (Trading Economics 2021).

As for Bosnia and Herzegovina, Saudi Arabia seeks to accommodate an increasing number of Arab investors in the Bosnian capital city. To this end, many air companies now connect Riyadh directly to Sarajevo, and Saudi Arabia has financed several luxury hotels to accommodate Arab investors. In addition, the 'Sarajevo City Center' and the 'BBI Centar', two important shopping malls built with Arab funds between 2008 and 2014, have also led to the rise of Arab tourism in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Martin-Diaz 2021, 119). Thus, it is interesting to note that very quickly, Bosnia and Herzegovina has become one of the most popular destinations for the Arab middle class looking for alternatives to Tunisia, Egypt, or Libya since the beginning of the Arab Spring in December 2010 (Editorial Board 2017).

What strategies do the emerging powers extend their political influence in the WB?

Following the first sub-question that assessed the economic impact of emerging countries and their interests in the WB, it is also essential to analyze in this section the political approaches favored by emerging countries to extend their zone of influence in the region. Of course, since the two sections are strongly linked, both remain interconnected, and links are inevitable. Russia illustrates this phenomenon: as pointed out earlier, while the company Zarubezhneft is in a constant loss in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Secrieru (2019) notes that "profit-making was often of secondary importance: the mercantilist drive sought to create dependencies and endow the Russian state with political influence in the region" (p. 3).

Consequently, through economic dependence, Russia attempts to extend its zone of influence in the WB countries. Moreover, Russia, a historical ally of Serbia (Lika 2016, 557), relies on the Serbian minorities settled in several states in the region to consolidate its influence. Indeed, the Russian authorities revive the nationalist desires of Serbian minorities, whether in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, or Montenegro, to weaken the governments in place in these states (Beha 2015, 105). In this regard, the example of Bosnia and Herzegovina is interesting. In

this country that remains composed of various ethnic groups, Russia encouraged the Serbian minority to organize a referendum in February 2016 to separate its territory from the rest of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Unsurprisingly, 90% of this Serb-originated population showed themselves in favor of the split (Shapiro 2018, 2). Although the EU considered this referendum illegitimate, Russia's strong political influence was still exerted in the WB.

Unlike Russia, China, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey privileged the use of soft power² towards the WB, whether religious in the case of Saudi Arabia and Turkey or cultural in the case of China, in order to increase their visibility on the ground. Historically, during the massacres perpetrated in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the early 1990s, Turkey and Saudi Arabia drew closer to the Muslim-majority WB countries, i.e., Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Kosovo (Hänsel and Feyerabend 2018, 7). In these states, both emerging powers have endeavored to restore the Muslim heritage, particularly through the construction of new mosques. Two examples can be highlighted: the construction financed by Turkey of the largest Ottoman-style mosque in the WB region (in Tirana) and inaugurated by President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan himself (Rasidagic and Hesova 2020, 108-109) and the fully Arab-funded building in 2000 of the King Fahd Mosque, a gigantic mosque installed in the Alipašino polje district of Sarajevo (Editorial Board 2017). In this particular way, it is also interesting to note that the use of religious soft power is not recent in the case of Saudi Arabia. This strategy finds its roots in the pan-Arabist project of previous Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser to extend, as early as the 1960s, the Wahhabi-Salafist religious influence in Muslim countries (Bayramzadeh 2021). Relying on Arab non-governmental organizations (NGOs) established in the region, the Wahhabi ideology has rapidly spread through the WB (Mouline 2020, 44).

In contrast, China does not articulate its soft power around an ideology but rather favors the spread of its own culture. To this end, education is a key element of China's strategy, which refers somehow to the first pillar of Mao Zedong's approach in the 60s (the two additional pillars being the army and the Communist Party) (Tonchev 2020, 8). Confucius Institutes (CI) is established in most WB states and offer local students the opportunity to discover Chinese culture and language. Run by the Chinese Ministry of Education, these CI promote a positive image of China abroad. They also offer the opportunity to discover Chinese society and politics and, like Saudi Arabia, facilitate academic exchanges between WB countries and universities based in Beijing (Babublik 2021) (or in Riyadh for students from Muslim-majority countries) (Conesa 2016). Finally, politically using health issues, China has become the main donor of Covid vaccines to five WB countries respectively to Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Northern Macedonia, Montenegro, and Serbia (Hopkins 2021).

The exclusion of Kosovo is not without consequences for this country; unlike Saudi Arabia and Turkey, but in the same way as Russia, China still refuses to recognize the independence of the Republic of Kosovo and consequently limits its investments to the five other WB states. As members of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), China and Russia use their veto right at the international level to prevent Kosovo from international recognition of

² The concept of soft power is defined by Joseph Nye as "the ability to get what you want through attraction rather than coercion or payments. [Thus, soft power] arises from the attractiveness of a country's culture, political ideals, and policies". See: Nye Jr., Joseph, "Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics", New York, Public Affairs, 2004, p. 10.

its territorial sovereignty. However, China and Russia have different reasons for this rejection. On the one hand, and similar to some EU member states (MS) that still refuse to recognize the state of Kosovo³, China is now facing internal tensions. For many years, the Chinese authorities have feared that recognizing Kosovo's independence would create a precedent that could, in the long term, revive the desire for independence of the regions of Tibet and Xinjiang (Tonchev 2017, 2).

On the other hand, Russia seems to be using this right of veto to assert its influence in the region even more. In fact, by preventing Kosovo from being internationally recognized, Russia drastically reduces the chances of obtaining a final agreement between the Kosovar and Serbian authorities in the 2011 EU-initiated normalization process where both Kosovo and Serbia are expected to recognize each other.

Nevertheless, without a formal agreement between the two protagonists, Serbia cannot hope to join the EU since a final agreement remains a condition imposed by the EU in Chapter 35 of the negotiating framework with Serbia. Back in 2012, Wolfgang Koeth (2012) summed up this situation as follows: "without a credible perspective for Kosovo, there is no credible membership perspective for Serbia, [and] without a perspective for Serbia, there is no credible perspective for the rest of the Western Balkans" (p. 36), thus allowing the *status quo* that the Russian authorities pursue (Bieber and Tzifakis 2019, 6).

Do the emerging powers threaten the EU's influence in the WB?

The above example perfectly illustrates a new situation for the EU: while it has always been and is still considered the most powerful external actor in the WB, especially since the implementation of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) (Bretherton and Vogler 2006, 147), the EU is now facing new challenges. Built around the potential integration of the WB states into the Union on the principle of meritocracy (Garde 2017, 69), this policy has proven to be "the major instrument through which the European Union [seeks] to foster democratic reforms in the Western Balkans" (Richter and Wunsch 2020, 41). However, it is clear that today, the project of a possible enlargement seems to be standing still for several reasons.

Firstly, the EU is currently going through 'enlargement fatigue'. The rise of nationalism in the many EU Member States (MS) and the reluctance to integrate states that remain prone to organized crime and have extremely high unemployment rates hold back the MS's willingness to open up to the WB countries. Secondly, and in contrast, the six WB countries are experiencing what scholars call 'waiting fatigue'. This lack of significant progress in the accession process drives the six states concerned to distance themselves from the EU and turn more towards the other powers active in the region. Thirdly, the WB states are witnessing the gradual withdrawal of the EU and the US's traditional powers from their region.

On the one hand, the EU has undergone a succession of economic and financial crises since 2008 that have forced its leaders to opt for austerity policies, which have impacted the WB. Indeed, most WB states are experiencing a strong decline in their respective economies, growth, and social, political, and institutional reforms. As already shown in 2012, their ability to meet the

³Those EU Member States are: Cyprus, Greece, Romania, Slovakia, and Spain. For more information, see notably Newman Edward and Visoka Gëzim, "The Foreign Policy of State Recognition: Kosovo's Diplomatic Strategy to Join International Society", *Foreign Policy Analysis*, Vol. 14, No. 3, 2018, p. 380.

EU's membership criteria is undermined, and the implementation of the *acquis communautaire* in these countries is not taking place (Panagiotou 2012, 1-2).

In addition, internal problems such as the Brexit or migration crisis also seem to affect its political will to carry on with enlargement, including the WB. On the other hand, the US is progressively leaving the WB region for Asia, preferring to let the EU tackle the problems that concern it most (Lika 2021).

Faced with the 'power vacuum' that the European and US withdrawal is creating, several authors believe today that the EU must rapidly react: these suggest that if the EU does not rapidly offer new political perspectives to the WB states, in particular by starting the negotiation process with all of them (Dabrowskis 2020), then "Turkey, Russia, and China will continue to pursue their political and economic priorities in the Western Balkans (...) to the detriment of the region itself and EU countries' interests" (Tcherneva and Varma 2019). According to a European diplomat, "if we (the EU) do not act, we allow other actors to exert their political and economic influence in the region, which is not in our interest" (Brzozowski and Makszimov 2021). Nevertheless, it must be concluded that today, the WB states have already changed their approach towards the EU significantly, especially in terms of discourse. The example of Serbia speaks for itself: although it has been negotiating with the EU since 2014, the tone of the Serbian president, Aleksandar Vučić, is hardening, threatening that Serbia will turn even more to Russia and China if the European project does not materialize soon (Gotev 2021). Despite the 82.5% (but only 64.1% in Serbia) of the total population of the WB remaining in favor of EU integration (Stratula *et al.* 2020, 3), such a situation depicts, once again, the growing influence of the emerging powers in the WB and consequently, the clear loss of influence of the EU.

CONCLUSION

This research aimed to examine how the emerging powers in the WB influence the redistribution of power in a multipolar world. Three sub-questions further allowed us to examine specific aspects related to the presence of emerging powers. Several elements can be linked to the theoretical framework to provide an answer, admittedly far from univocal, to the initial research question.

First, emerging countries are questioning their place in global governance. To do so, they seek to increase their visibility abroad, particularly in the WB region. The use of soft power seems to be privileged, whether it is religious in the case of Saudi Arabia and Turkey or cultural and educational in the case of China. Moreover, as this research points out, the EU's position as the main external actor in the Balkans is now threatened by the emerging countries, which confirms the current redistribution of power to the latter's advantage. Several reasons have been mentioned, notably the progressive withdrawal of the US, a traditional power in the region, or the enlargement and 'waiting fatigue' that is taking hold between the EU and the WB countries. Secondly, the formal/informal cleavage can be observed through the growing number of informal forums set up by the emerging powers.

An illustrative example is the 17+1 format supported by China, which aims to bypass the more complex institutional framework of the EU. Nevertheless, it is clear that by including EU MS, China is extending its influence in formal international organizations.

Thirdly, the multilateralism/bilateralism cleavage is strongly tilted in favor of the latter since emerging powers take much more benefits from bilateral agreements with a third country.

From these agreements, a relationship of dependence regularly emerges, with the WB heavily relying on the powers active in the region to supply essential resources and infrastructure. However, this research has shown that depending on emerging powers fragilizes third countries; for example, the case of Montenegro with China. Will the growing influence of emerging powers force the EU to accelerate the integration of the WB states into the Union? What dangers do these WB countries run if they increase their economic and political dependence on emerging powers? Would the emerging powers be able to strengthen the economic development of the WB in the future? Furthermore, how can the current Russian invasion of Ukraine and the economic sanctions impact its influence in the WB?

These questions offer new analytical perspectives on the emerging powers' increasing presence in the WB region.

COMPLIANCE WITH ETHICAL STANDARDS

Acknowledgments:

Not applicable.

Funding:

Not applicable.

Statement of human rights:

This article does not contain any studies with human participants performed by any authors.

Statement on the welfare of animals:

This article does not contain any studies with animals performed by any authors.

Informed consent:

Not applicable.

REFERENCES

1. Babulik, Matúš. 2021. "China's Influence in the Western Balkans". Strategic analysis (blog). <https://www.strategicanalysis.sk/chinas-influence-in-the-western-balkans/> (06 November 2021).
2. Bayramzadeh, Kamal. 2021. "La Rivalité Entre La Turquie Et L'arabie Saoudite Dans Les Balkans Occidentaux Et Son Impact Pour L'Union Européenne". *La Revue de dialogues inter-régionaux*.
3. Beha Adem. 2015. "Disputes Over The 15-Point Agreement On Normalization Of Relations Between Kosovo And Serbia", *Nationalities Papers* 43(1):102-121. DOI: 10.1080/00905992.2014.990367
4. Bieber, Florian, and Tzifakis, Nikolaos. 2019. "The Western Balkans as a Geopolitical Chessboard? Myths, Realities, and Policy Options", SSRN Scholarly Paper, Rochester, pp. 1-30.
5. Bretherton, Charlotte, and Vogler, John. 2006. "The European Union as a Global Actor", London, Routledge.
6. Brzozowski, Alexandra, and Makszimov, Vlagyislav. 2021. "Bring Western Balkans Back on the Agenda, Urge Nine EU Member States", *Euroactiv*, 11 March 2021, sect. Global Europe - Enlargement. https://www.euractiv.fr/section/avenir-de-l-ue/news/bring-western-balkans-back-on-the-agenda-urge-nine-eu-member-states/?_ga=2.147450743.1187582461.1636612231-687783847.1636612230 (05 November 2021).
7. Carrai, Maria Adele, Defraigne, Jean-Christophe, and Wouters, Jan. 2020. "The Belt and Road Initiative and global governance: by way of introduction", In Carrai M. A., Defraigne, J-C, and Wouters J. (ed.), *The Belt and Road Initiative and global governance*, London, Edward Elgar Publishing, pp. 1-19. DOI: 978-1-78990-622-6.
8. Conesa, Pierre. 2016. "Dr. Saoud et Mr. Djihad. La diplomatie religieuse de l'Arabie saoudite", Paris, Robert Laffont.
9. Dabat, Alejandro, and Leal, Paulo. 2019. "The Rise And Fall Of The United States In Global Hegemony", *Problemas Del Desarrollo*, 50(199):87-114. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.22201/iiiec.20078951e.2019.199.67934>
10. Dabrowski, Marek. 2020. "Can the EU Overcome its Enlargement Impasse?", Bruegel (blog), 27 February 2020. <https://www.bruegel.org/2020/02/can-the-european-union-overcome-its-enlargement-impasse/> (11 November 2021).
11. Editorial Board. 2017. "Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Influence of the Gulf States on Economics and Politics", Mediterranean Affairs (blog), 22 November 2017. <https://www.mediterraneanaffairs.com/amp/bosnia-herzegovina-influence-gulf-states-economics-politics/> (04 November 2021).
12. Garde, Paul. 2017. "Les Balkans. Héritages et évolutions", Paris, Flammarion.
13. Gotev, Georgi. 2021. "Analyst: Aleksandar Vucic is a Jekyll and Hyde Character", *Euroactiv*. 11 November 2021, sect. Interviews. <https://www.euractiv.com/section/all/interview/analyst-aleksandar-vucic-is-a-jekyll-and-hyde-character/> (13 November 2021).

14. Hackaj, Ardian. 2018. "China and Western Balkans", Tirana, Cooperation and Development Institute, pp. 1-11.
15. Hänsel, Lars, and Feyerabend, Florian C. 2018. "The influence of external actors in the Western Balkans : a map of geopolitical players", Berlin, Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, pp. 1-41.
16. Hopkins, Valerie. 2021, "Montenegro Calls for EU Help over \$1bn Chinese Highway Loan", *Financial Times*, 11 April 2021, sect. Western Balkans.
<https://www.ft.com/content/3dd7a516-5352-4f48-bfac-236e43b2342d> (03 November 2021).
17. Hopkins, Valerie. 2021. "Balkan nations turn to China and Russia for jobs", *Financial Times*, 2 February 2021, sect. Covid-19 vaccines. <https://www.ft.com/content/7508a3eb-c36b-4f6b-bd13-4a3a248b0686> (12 November 2021).
18. Ikenberry, G. John. 2008. "The End Of Liberal International Order?", *International Affairs* 94(1):7-23. DOI: 10.1093/ia/iix241
19. Jinping, Xi. 2013. "Promote People-to-People Friendship and Create a Better Future", discourse given at the University of Nazarbayev (Kazakhstan), 11 September 2013.
20. Koeth, Wolfgang. 2012. "Bosnia, Kosovo, and the EU: Is Accession Possible Without Full Sovereignty?", *EIPAScope* 1(1):31-36. DOI: <http://aei.pitt.edu/id/eprint/43469>.
21. Kovacevic, Danijel. 2021. "Bosnia Signs Sarajevo-Belgrade Highway Agreement with Turkey", *Balkan Insight*, 16 March 2021, sect. News.
<https://balkaninsight.com/2021/03/16/bosnia-signs-sarajevo-belgrade-highway-agreement-with-turkey/> (05 November 2021).
22. Krstinovska, Ana. 2022. "China's Development Assistance To The Western Balkans And Its Impact On Democratic Governance And Decision-Making", *Journal of Liberty and International Affairs* 8(1): 229-242. DOI: <https://www.doi.org/10.47305/JLIA2281229k>
23. Le Monde. 2021. "Jim O'Neill : 'Le concept des BRIC disait que la domination économique américaine ne continuerait pas'", *Le Monde.fr*, 15 September 2021, sect. Economie mondiale. https://www.lemonde.fr/economie/article/2021/09/15/jim-o-neill-le-concept-des-bric-disait-que-la-domination-economique-americaine-ne-continuerait-pas_6094751_3234.html (06 November 2021).
24. Lika, Liridon. 2016. "La Reconnaissance Internationale De La République Du Kosovo (2008-2016) : Succès, Défis Et Perspectives De Ce Nouvel État", *Revue de la Faculté de droit de l'Université de Liège*, pp. 531-568.
25. Lika Liridon. 2021. "The Western Balkans At The Crossroads Of European Integration And The Emerging Powers' Projection Of Influence", *La Revue de dialogues inter-régionaux*.
26. Martin-Diaz, Jordi. 2021. "The Urban Transformation of Sarajevo: After the Siege, the Role and Impact of the International Community", Basingstoke, Springer Nature.
27. Mélandri, Pierre. 2007. "Les États-Unis : la continuation de l'unilatéralisme par d'autres moyens ?", In: Badie, B (ed.) *Le multilatéralisme. Nouvelles formes de l'action internationale*, Paris, La Découverte, 2007, pp. 195-214. DOI: 10.3917/dec.badie.2007.01.0195.
28. Milani, Carlos R. S. 2011. "Les Pays Émergents Dans L'actuel Ordre Mondial :

- Changements Et Légitimité Politique", *Revue internationale et stratégique* 82(2):52-62. DOI: 10.3917/ris.082.0052.
29. Mouline, Nabil. 2020. "Arabie Saoudite : Une Nouvelle Diplomatie Religieuse?", *Politique étrangère* 1(1):43-55. DOI:<https://doi.org/10.3917/pe.201.0043>.
30. Newman, Edward, and Visoka, Gëzim. 2018. "The Foreign Policy Of State Recognition: Kosovo's Diplomatic Strategy To Join International Society", *Foreign Policy Analysis* 14(3): 367-387. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1093/fpa/orw042>.
31. Nielsen, Nikolaj. 2021. "EU Refuses to Bail out Montenegro's China Loan", *EUobserver*, 13 April 2021, sect. EU & the World. <https://euobserver.com/world/151512> (10November2021).
32. Nye, Joseph S. 2004. "Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics", New York, Public Affairs.
33. Presidency of the Republic of Turkey (2019), "La Turquie joue un rôle constructif dans la stabilité et la prospérité des Balkans", 7 October 2019. <https://tccb.gov.tr/fr/actualites/1861/110982/-la-turquie-joue-un-r-le-constructif-dans-la-stabilite-et-la-prosp-rit-des-balkans-> (04 November 2021).
34. Panagiotou, Ritsa. 2012. "The Impact of the Economic Crisis on the Western Balkans and Their EU Accession Prospects", EUI-RSCAS Working Papers, European University Institute, pp. 1-19.
35. Rasidagic, Ešref Kenan, and Hesova, Zora. 2020. "Development of Turkish Foreign Policy Towards the Western Balkans with Focus on Bosnia and Herzegovina", *Croatian International Relations Review* 26(86):96-129. DOI: 10.37173/cirr.26.86.4
36. Richter, Solveig, and Wunsch, Natasha. 2020. "Money, Power, Glory: The Linkages Between Eu Conditionality And State Capture In The Western Balkans", *Journal of European Public Policy* 27(1):41-62. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/13501763.2019.1578815>
37. Santander, Sebastian. 2009. "Ordre mondial, hégémonie et puissances émergentes", In: Santander, S. (coord.), *L'émergence de nouvelles puissances : vers un système multipolaire?*, Paris, Ellipses, pp. 9-25. DOI: 978-2-7298-5022-7
38. Shapiro, Richard. 2018. "Serbian and Russian Relations: The Future Implications for Serbia's Accession to the European Union", conference given at the Transatlantic Students' Conference, James Madison University, 23 April 2018.
39. Stratula, Corina, Kmezić, Marko, Tzifakis, Nikolaos, Bonomi, Matteo, and Nechev, Zoran. 2020. "Between a rock and a hard place: Public opinion and integration in the Western Balkans", BIEPAG technical report, Graz, Balkans in Europe Policy Advisory Group, pp. 1-9.
40. Sutyryn, Sergey, Trofimenko, Olga, Vorobieva, Irina, Zashev, Peter, Abramkov, Alexander, and Pantić, Bojan. 2019. "Russian Investments In The Balkans: Expectations And Realities - The Special Case Of Lukoil", *Journal of East-West Business* 25(4):319-339. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/10669868.2018.1467844>.
41. Tcherneva, Vessela, and Varma, Tara. 2019. "After the French Veto: The New Scramble for the Western Balkans - European Council on Foreign Relations", European Council on Foreign Relations (blog), 25 October 2019. https://ecfr.eu/article/commentary_after_the_french_veto_the_new_scramble_for_the_western_balkans/ (02 November 2021).

42. Tonchev, Plamen. 2017. "China's Road into Western Balkans", Brief, Issue, Paris, EU Institute for Security Studies, pp. 1-4.
43. Tonchev, Plamen. 2020. "China's Soft Power in Southeast Europe", Dialog Südosteuropa, Sarajevo, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, pp. 1-29.
44. Trading Economics. 2021. "Serbia Exports of arms and ammunition, parts and accessories to Saudi Arabia", Serbia's exports. <https://tradingeconomics.com/serbia/exports/saudi-arabia/arms-ammunition-parts-accessories> (09 November 2021).
45. Vercauteren, Pierre. 2015. "Emerging Powers: What Power?", *Studia Diplomatica* 68(1):95-107. DOI:07702965, 25930702.
46. Veron, Emmanuel. 2020. "Le Format 17+1, Un Outil Au Service De La Politique Européenne De Pékin Défiant L'UE ?", FDBDA (blog), 10 January 2020. <https://www.fdbda.org/2020/01/le-format-171-un-outil-au-service-de-la-politique-europeenne-de-pek-in-defiant-lue/> (07 November 2021).
47. Vracic, Alida. 2016. "Turkey's Role in the Western Balkans", Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, Berlin, German Institute for International and Security Affairs, pp. 1-34.
48. Wintgens, Sophie, and Zacharie. 2016. "Le Rôle Des Pays Émergents Dans La Gouvernance Économique Mondiale", *Annuaire Français de Relations Internationales* 17(1):1-13.

Copyright © 2022 The author/s
This work is licensed under a CC-BY 3.0 license
(* Corresponding Author
Peer review method: Double-blind
Received: 04.04.2022
Accepted: 18.04.2022
Published: 14.06.2022
Review article
DOI: <https://www.doi.org/10.47305/JLIA2282321x>

How to cite:

Xuedan, Yao. 2022. "FRENCH IMMIGRATION POLICY DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC". Journal of Liberty and International Affairs 8 (2):321-31. <https://e-jlia.com/index.php/jlia/article/view/615>.



FRENCH IMMIGRATION POLICY DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Yao Xuedan^{1*}

¹Beijing Language and Culture University - Beijing, China  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0807-9329> ✉ cynthiayao1019@gmail.com

Abstract: *Following the start of the European refugee crisis in 2015, France had to modify its immigration and asylum policies. However, France faced two main issues resulting from the pandemic: pandemic control and refugee management. This article examined the reform and adjustment of France's immigration and refugee asylum policies before and after the pandemic outbreak. It concluded that the pandemic had aggravated the problems of refugee management in France. At the same time, refugees in France were in a difficult situation. The French government had imposed restrictions on entry and exit, leaving many refugees stranded in France, unable to return home. Moreover, the high sanitary conditions of accommodation due to the pandemic led to the fact that the health of many refugees could not be guaranteed. Therefore, the French government should enhance the guarantee of a healthy environment for refugees, which is also beneficial to the social management of France.*

Keywords: *France; Immigration; Asylum; Policy; Covid-19*

INTRODUCTION

The Covid-19 pandemic began ravaging the planet in early 2020, wreaking havoc on the healthcare systems of several countries. As a result, the pandemic has placed higher demands on governments' social management abilities, and many nations are scrambling to devise Covid-19 containment policies. Many countries implemented border closure measures in the early stages of the pandemic, which resulted in a dramatic drop in migration and international movement of people in 2020. Early in the pandemic, European nations closed their internal borders and restricted the movement of their citizens. As a result, one of the methods used by the French government to combat the pandemic was to modify immigration and refugee policies.

Since Macron's presidency, tackling the integration of immigrants in France has been a top priority for him. According to Macron's government, the primary strategy to enhance immigrants' integration is to build their value identity. However, the onset of the pandemic in 2020 will surely make managing French society more difficult.

The focus of France's immigration and asylum policy change is now on balancing the pandemic and immigration management, and it is also a negotiating chip for each contender in the 2022 French presidential election to win the presidency.

THE DOMESTIC PANDEMIC SITUATION IS NOT OPTIMISTIC

The situation in France did not improve significantly over the two years of the Covid-19 pandemic, and President Macron declared a national lockdown on 17 March 2020 due to the rapid spread of the pandemic in France. Schools were closed indefinitely, and public activities were limited to basic services. During this time, France closed the European Union's external borders to non-EU nationals, while the French government likewise limited people's mobility beyond its borders. The French government relaxed the lockdown measures on 11 May after the national lockdown had lasted nearly two months. The lockdown was gradually lifted for businesses and schools, as the pandemic and the national lockdown had hit France hard socioeconomically. The public was growing dissatisfied with the nationwide lockdown.

Despite strong entrance and exit controls, the pandemic's lax internal control resulted in a dramatic surge in infection rates in France in October 2020, making it the country with the most illnesses in Europe within 24 hours. On 28 October 2020, Macron ordered a second nationwide lockdown to combat the virus's widespread spread. The lockdown was less severe than in March, and some schools and businesses remained open, but France's external borders with non-EU countries remained closed. As Christmas neared in 2020, the French government began to let up on its lockdown plans, announcing a countrywide lockdown with a curfew on 15 December. In March 2021, Europe witnessed the third pandemic of illness, prompting Macron to announce a third national lockdown, which would begin on 3 April and last for a month, with schools remaining open.

The pandemic situation in France remained bleak until this year. Because of the extremely transmissible nature of Covid-19, France has been amid a large pandemic since December 2021, with an average of about 500,000 new infections each day, much exceeding the previous three national lockdowns. However, in February 2022, France announced the gradual easing of restrictions, declaring that the country will shift to the pandemic era because of improving health circumstances, besides the impending presidential election and mounting anti-lockdown rallies. Following that, the French government eased limitations on the size of forced telework and public meetings and stopped mandating masks to be worn in outdoor public spaces.

During these three national lockdowns, the French government collaborated with local governments to implement regionalized measures to restore trust and avoid charges (Greer SL 2022). However, the recurring breakouts of the Covid-19 pandemic have exposed the French health system's structural flaws, and the bureaucracy of French health decision-making has resulted in inadequate policy implementation (Or *et al.* 2022). France's public health capabilities must be strengthened to handle the outbreak properly.

REBOUNDING OF THE ASYLUM APPLICATION

Europe is a crucial destination for Middle Eastern and Latin American immigrants seeking asylum, owing to its excellent economy. According to Eurostat, the number of first-time asylum applicants in France has increased every year, reaching a high of 138,000 overall applications in 2019. However, in 2020, this number decreased, and France ranked third with 81,800 general asylum applicants or 20% of the total number of first-time applications in the EU (Eurostat 2022). Following the Covid-19, there has been a marked decrease in asylum applications in Europe, down from 530,000 in 2014.

However, this cannot simply be attributed to a decreased willingness to request asylum; rather, it is due to the EU Member States' restoration of internal border management during the pandemic, which severely limited the admission of citizens from other countries. However, such border restrictions do not prohibit a person from claiming international protection under the principle of non-refoulment. Instead, the reduction in refugee applications is due to the nearly complete stoppage of commercial flights, resulting in a sharp drop in asylum applications as one of the few legal routes to Europe becomes abruptly unavailable (Marguerite 2020). Even though the pandemic situation has not greatly improved by 2021, the number of migrants arriving in Europe is on the rise again, owing to ongoing wars in the Middle East and the US exit from Afghanistan, among other things. According to Eurostat, 60,800 first-time asylum applicants requested protection in the EU Member States in September 2021, up 58% from September 2020. (38,600 first-time applicants). It is the first time since the pandemic that the number of first-time applications had surpassed the level seen before the previous pandemic, which occurred in February 2020 (55,700) (Eurostat 2022). This demonstrates that the pandemic's spread has not negatively affected migrants' desire to request asylum and that a recovery in applications is unavoidable if border restrictions are relaxed across Europe. In September 2019, Germany had the greatest number of first-time asylum applications (13,800), accounting for over a quarter of all first-time applicants in the EU. On the other hand, France is a close second with 12,800 applicants, accounting for almost 21% of all applications. The strain on France to manage asylum and immigration has not lessened against the backdrop of continued global turmoil, and this scenario is likely to persist for some time.

ADJUSTMENT OF FRENCH IMMIGRATION AND ASYLUM POLICY IN THE FACE OF THE PANDEMIC

Marking the beginning of the refugee crisis in Europe, France has seen numerous terrorist incidents, resulting in a spike in anti-immigrant sentiment. France's extreme nationalism and xenophobia have exacerbated social divisions; on the other hand, refugees and immigrants of two or three generations, if they genuinely integrate into French society, have emerged as the most pressing social issues for the French government to address. Macron declared bridging the chasm between French immigrants and society one of his top social priorities during his presidency, vowing to strive for reform of the country's immigration and asylum policy.

Before the Covid-19: Enactment of the New Asylum and Immigration Law

Macron has emphasized the importance of values identity in terms of social integration. Macron has placed religious restrictions in important public educational settings, such as the headscarves ban in public locations such as French schools. Furthermore, fostering the social integration of immigrants and refugees in France includes addressing how to deal with the naturalization of French refugees.

Since the acquisition of French citizenship is the first step for immigrants to become French citizens and thus integrate into French society formally, the Macron government has focused its immigration policy on modifying the nationality law to highlight the importance of identifying with the values of the Republic. The contemporary French nationality legislation was drafted between 1790 and 1791, marking the first time the constitution incorporated a definition of French citizenship. Between 1790 and 1795, there were two options for acquiring French citizenship: honorary citizenship and automatic naturalization (Maillard 2010). Following World War II, the French government changed its constitution to promote the naturalization and assimilation of second-generation immigrants into France to crush the Algerian colonists' independence rising and secure the legality of their French citizenship. Today, *jus soli* governs French nationality law, stating that anybody who respects French national principles can become a French citizen. This approach also stresses that globally shared ideals preserve national citizenship rather than racial or ethnic identity (Webster 2007). As a result, Macron's administration has increased the standards for immigrants' language skills while also reinforcing immigrants' affiliation with republican values.

In response to the rising problem of immigrant integration, the Macron government introduced another change to the nationality legislation in 2018 to make it easier for new immigrants to integrate into French society. After getting a residence permit, immigrants must travel to the French Office for Immigration and Integration (OFII) to sign a Republican Integration Contract (CIR). Signing this contract signifies a promise to respect French society and the French Republic's principles and values. The French citizenship material stressed the French state's symbols and mottos: the French flag, Marianne, freedom, equality, and fraternity. This was notably evident in the increased focus on themes such as secularism (Suvarierol 2021). In 2018, France passed the new Asylum and Immigration Law to combat illegal immigration, reform the asylum process, and promote refugee assimilation. As a result of unprecedented immigration pressure in 2017, the French government wants to accomplish effective immigration control and exercise the right to asylum through better asylum application processing and countermeasures against illegal immigration. However, at the same time, this bill significantly shortens the period of asylum applications, doubles the detention time of illegal immigrants, and imposes a one-year prison sentence for illegal entry into France, so harsh provisions also make the bill controversial.

After the Covid-19 Outbreak: Closing the External Borders

Signing the Schengen Agreement entails a certain cession of sovereignty for Schengen nations, and Schengen countries do not, in general, perform internal border controls. At the

same time, the EU created the Schengen Borders Code, which permits the Member States to temporarily regain control of internal borders in circumstances of major risks to public policy or internal security. However, this is the last option that must adhere to the proportionality principle. Furthermore, the European Commission will consider a member state's request to reestablish internal border restrictions, but it will not be able to veto a member state's choice to do so. Some EU Member States implemented border controls in the pandemics' early days to prevent home situations from escalating. After the pandemic outbreak, Macron has called on the EU Member States to cooperate in strengthening restrictions on the EU's external borders. The European Commission suggested to the Schengen Member States and the Schengen UN on 8 April 2020 that the temporary limitations on non-essential travel to the EU be extended until 15 May 2020. Since then, all EU Member States (excluding Ireland) have decided to apply and expand the travel restrictions. Nevertheless, the travel limitations do not apply to EU citizens, non-EU Schengen citizens, their families, or non-EU nationals who permanently reside in the EU to return to their native country (Doliwa-Klepacka 2021).

While border controls impeded EU integration during the pandemic, travel restrictions were critical for the pandemic response. They were thus approved by the EU and the individual EU Member States. The main point of disagreement is that the measures are inconsistent across Europe, resulting in just a few European nations applying uniform criteria for passengers from third countries entering the Schengen region through airports but allowing free movement across their internal borders (Schade 2021).

Most crucially, France's border restrictions prevent non-EU people from entering the country and leave many refugees trapped in the country. Three significant lockdowns occurred in France, each accompanied by limitations on internal cross-border travel. During the first national lockdown, many refugees were trapped in France and needed local assistance to return to their countries of origin. While some destination nations in the EU first banned forcible repatriation, others increased pressure on countries of origin. Hosting these returning refugees offers a significant issue for countries of origin in the context of the pandemic (Le Coz 2021).

THE CHALLENGES OF THE PANDEMIC FOR FRENCH IMMIGRATION AND ASYLUM POLICY

For Macron, ignoring internal opposition in the run-up to the election will not help him gain support for the presidential race. As a result, even though France's infection rate remains high, Macron's administration has chosen deregulation. There are still major issues with immigration and asylum policy.

The Difficulty of Controlling the Pandemic Has Increased

France is more forceful than other European countries regarding pandemic prevention and control. France is a highly centralized country where the government carries out the main public tasks through a central ministry (Wollmann 2004). Because of this, the French authorities can respond with a rapid shift in policy interventions to prevent the pandemic from worsening across the country. As a result, some academics believe that the French reaction strategy is a more aggressive, legalistic strategy that influences citizens' behavior (Yan 2020). Because of this,

the French authorities can respond with a rapid shift in policy interventions to prevent the pandemic from worsening across the country. Therefore, in the view of some scholars, the French response strategy is a more coercive, legalistic strategy aimed at changing the behavior of citizens (Kuhlmann 2021). The French people are unwilling to tolerate such severe regulations. While certain German central administrations have moved quicker and bolder in lifting the lockdown further than France, France has been more cautious, delayed, and reluctant to loosen and contain measures (Peretti-Watel 2021). This is because the emergency health system in France is not as well developed compared in Germany.

According to a poll on the French national lockdown, most respondents backed the policy as a temporary measure to contain the pandemic's spread. The French Ministry of Health, on the other hand, has been heavily chastised for its lack of testing capability and failure to renew its mask stock (Malliet 2020). In addition to dissatisfaction with health services, the lockdown would exacerbate the economic recession and contribute to France's hesitancy in decision-making.

Covid-19 wrecked the world economy, highlighting France's socioeconomic issues before the pandemic. First, the blockade had a considerable short-term negative impact on economic activity, with GDP in France decreasing by 5% in 2020 compared to the baseline trend (Esses 2021). The economic slump led to xenophobia and rejection of immigrants and refugees among the population. Immigrants and refugees are seen by some French citizens as not just a huge danger to the security of French society but also as rivals in the job market. Furthermore, some media regards refugees as the communication medium for Covid-19. While institutional racism contributes to these inequalities, it can also perpetuate racism and xenophobia on an individual level by instilling illness concerns (Roederer 2021). In short, the Covid-19 and the French government's strict policies led to enormous pressure on the French economy and increased French society's resistance to immigrant refugees.

The Health of Refugees Cannot Be Guaranteed

According to research, those living in vulnerable situations in Paris have a significant risk of infection, owing to their congested living circumstances. So homeless persons and people living in insecure housing should be provided with sufficient accommodation that eliminates overcrowding (Fassin 2020). As a result, French migrants spend lengthy periods in congested housing, increasing their chance of catching new infections. Furthermore, only 40% of migrants detained in detention facilities get deported (Armocida 2021). Therefore, many detained immigrants are not properly repatriated to their home countries.

Access to vaccines for migrants and refugees is one of the methods to defend refugees' basic rights and living circumstances. In a paper titled 'EU/Continental Europe Covid-19 Vaccination and Prioritization Strategy', the European Center for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) highlights migrants and refugees as prospective target populations for vaccination programs. However, EU Member States' perspectives and attitudes differ on this subject (May 2021). Migrants are highlighted explicitly in immunization campaigns in several EU nations, and migrants are just a priority category in a few others. Because Covid-19 is extremely contagious, it is critical to protect citizens' right to health. As a result, citizens, immigrants, and refugees

should be entitled to vaccinations. The French government actively pushes basic health care coverage for immigrants and refugees to encourage their social integration in France. The French government declared in May 2021 that anyone in an illegal position, regardless of whether or not they get public medical support, can be vaccinated. In addition, the French Office for Immigration and Integration (OFII) is giving Covid-19 immunization to all persons who come to file asylum petitions at its locations around the country. This is also a chance for these migratory groups to analyze their overall health state.

The implementation of healthcare benefits for asylum applicants, on the other hand, has not gone smoothly. On the one hand, due to French government laws, paperwork for asylum applicants seeking health treatment is difficult and takes a long time to obtain, discouraging potential candidates. However, when engaging with government employees or medical staff, some asylum applicants feel prejudiced against them (Carillon 2020). These two factors combine to explain why refugees are not as active as they should be when it comes to seeking medical help.

CONCLUSION

Macron's government's efforts to emerge from the instability of 2015 have generated some successes, and now French immigration and refugee management have. However, the pandemic has surely enhanced France's problems in managing immigration and refugees. Following the outbreak in March 2020, France closed its external borders and prohibited non-EU people from entering the country to prevent the pandemic from spreading further. However, due to tight limits on population mobility, some refugees could not return to their home countries and ended up in France. Furthermore, refugees live in overcrowded conditions, increasing their risk of infection and denying them access to essential health treatments. This makes it more difficult to handle refugees in France, and it also has an impact on the country's social security.

COMPLIANCE WITH ETHICAL STANDARDS

Acknowledgments:

Not applicable.

Funding:

This article was supported by the Fundamental Research Funds for the Central Universities and the Research Funds of Beijing Language and Culture University (Approval number: 21YCX084).

Statement of human rights:

All procedures performed in studies involving human participants were following the ethical standards of the institutional and/or national research committee and with the Declaration of Helsinki and its later amendments or comparable ethical standards.

Statement on the welfare of animals:

This article does not contain any studies with animals performed by any authors.

Informed consent:

Not applicable.

REFERENCES

1. Armocida, Benedetta, et al. 2021. "Challenges in the equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines for migrant populations in Europe." *The Lancet Regional Health - Europe* 6. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lanepe.2021.100147>.
2. Arnoux-Bellavitis, Marguerite. 2020. "The Influence of Covid-19 on The European Asylum and Migration Policy: Making health a priority while ensuring respect for fundamental rights." Institute of European Democrats. <https://www.iedonline.eu/publications/2020/geopolitics-values/the-influence-of-covid-19-on-the-european-asylum-and-migration-policy-making-health-a-priority-while-ensuring-respect-for-fundamental-rights-arnoux-bellavitis>.
3. Carillon, Séverine, et al. 2020. "Immigrants facing Covid 19 containment in France: An ordinary hardship of disaffiliation." *Journal of Migration and Health Journal of Migration and Health*, 1-2:100032. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jmh.2020.100032>.
4. Doliwa-Klepacka, Anna, and Mieczysława Zdanowicz. 2021. "The European Union Current Asylum Policy: Selected Problems in the Shadow of Covid-19." *International Journal for the Semiotics of Law-Revue internationale de Sémiotique juridique* 1-17. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11196-020-09744-3>.
5. Esses, Victoria M., and Leah K. Hamilton. 2021. "Xenophobia and anti-immigrant attitudes in the time of COVID-19." *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations* 24(2): 53-259. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1368430220983470>.
6. European Commission. 2020. "COVID-19: Temporary restriction on non-essential travel to the EU. Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the European Council and the Council." Accessed January 2022. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52020DC0115&from=EN>.
7. Eurostat. 2022. "First-time asylum applicants down by a third in 2020." Accessed January 2022. <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-eurostat-news/-/ddn-20210324-1?redirect=%2Feurostat%2Fweb%2Fasylum-and-managed-migration%2Fpublications>.
8. Eurostat. 2022. "First-time asylum applicants up by 21% in September 2021." Accessed January 2022. <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-eurostat-news/-/ddn-20211222-2>.
9. Fassin, Didier. 2020. "Hazardous confinement during the COVID-19 pandemic: The fate of migrants detained yet nondeportable." *Journal of Human Rights* 19(5): 613-623. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14754835.2020.1822155>.
10. France Diplomacy. 2020. "Coronavirus - Statement by Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs to all French citizens abroad 17 March 2020." Accessed January 2022. https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/coming-to-france/coming-to-france-your-covid-19-questions-answered/coronavirus-statements/article/coronavirus-statement-by-minister-for-europe-and-foreign-affairs-to-all-french?debut_ssra=50&page_courante=6#pagination_ssra.
11. Gouvernement.fr. 2022. "Asylum and Immigration." Accessed January 2022. <https://www.gouvernement.fr/en/asylum-and-immigration>.

12. Greer SL, Rozenblum S, Falkenbach M, et al. 2022. "Centralizing and decentralizing governance in the COVID-19 pandemic: The politics of credit and blame." *Health Policy (Amsterdam, Netherlands)*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.healthpol.2022.03.004>.
13. Kuhlmann, Sabine, et al. 2021. "Tracing divergence in crisis governance: responses to the COVID-19 pandemic in France, Germany, and Sweden compared." *International Review of Administrative Sciences* 87(3): 556–575. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0020852320979359>.
14. Le Coz, Camille, and Kathleen Newland. 2021. "Rewiring Migrant Returns and Reintegration after the COVID-19 Shock." <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/rewiring-migrant-returns-reintegration-covid-19#:~:text=Rewiring%20Migrant%20Returns%20and%20Reintegration%20after%20the%20COVID%2D19%20Shock,-By%20Camille%20Le&text=Since%20the%20COVID%2D19%20pandemic,families%20in%20these%20difficult%20times>.
15. Maillard, Dominique. 2010. "The Muslims in France and the French Model of Integration." *Journal of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies (in Asia)* 4(4): 1-24. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19370679.2010.12023165>.
16. Malliet, Paul, et al. 2020. "Assessing Short-Term and Long-Term Economic and Environmental Effects of the COVID-19 Crisis in France." *Environmental and Resource Economics* 76:877. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10640-020-00488-z>.
17. May, Paul. 2021. "The Letter and Spirit of the Law: Barriers to Healthcare Access for Asylum Applicants in France." *Journal of International Migration and Integration* 22:1383–1401. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12134-021-00821-5>.
18. Migration and Home Affairs. 2022. "Temporary Reintroduction of Border Control." Accessed January 2022. https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/policies/schengen-borders-and-visa/schengen-area/temporary-reintroduction-border-control_en.
19. OFII. "l'Office Français de l'Immigration et de l'Intégration, Le contrat d'intégration républicaine." Accessed January 2022. <https://www.ofii.fr/procedure/accueil-integration/>.
20. Or, Zeynep, et al. 2022. "France's response to the Covid-19 pandemic: between a rock and a hard place." *Health Econ Policy Law* 17(1):14-26. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1744133121000165>.
21. Peretti-Watel, Patrick, Pierre Verger, and Odile Launay. 2020. "The French general population's attitudes toward lockdown against COVID-19: a fragile consensus." *BMC Public Health* 20(1920): 8. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-020-10048-1>.
22. RFI. 2021. "France's Macron announces new lockdown to fight Covid-19 second wave." Accessed January 2022. <https://www.rfi.fr/en/france/20201028-france-emmanuel-macron-announces-new-lockdown-to-fight-covid-19-second-wave-health-government-confinement-pandemic>.
23. Roederer, Thomas, et al. 2021. "Seroprevalence and risk factors of exposure to COVID-19 in homeless people in Paris, France: a cross-sectional study." *Lancet Public Health* 6: e202–09. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S2468-2667\(21\)00001-3](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2468-2667(21)00001-3).
24. Schade, Daniel. 2021. "Crisis-proof Schengen and freedom of movement: Lessons from the Covid-19 pandemic."

<https://www.delorscentre.eu/en/publications/detail/publication/crisis-proof-schengen-and-freedom-of-movement>.

25. Suvarierol, Semin. 2021. "National fields of civic integration: Operationalization of citizenship requirements." *Ethnicities* 21(2):352-374. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1468796820963979>.
26. Webster, Jennifer. 2007. "French Identity, Muslim Identity: Universalism, Laïcité, and the Islamic Challenge." College of Arts and Sciences, Department of Political Science. <https://doi.org/10.17615/tj60-4y71>.
27. Wollmann, Hellmut. 2004. "Local government reforms in Great Britain, Sweden, Germany, and France: Between multi-function and single-purpose organizations." *Local Government Studies* 30(4): 639–665. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0300393042000318030>.
28. Yan, Bo, et al. 2020. "Why Do Countries Respond Differently to COVID-19? A Comparative Study of Sweden, China, France, and Japan." *The American Review of Public Administration* 50(6-7):762-769. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0275074020942445>.

Copyright © 2022 The author/s

This work is licensed under a CC-BY 3.0 license

(*) Corresponding author

Peer review method: Double-blind

Received: 10.04.2022

Accepted: 25.04.2022

Published: 14.06.2022

Thematic section: *Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine*

Review article

DOI: <https://www.doi.org/10.47305/JLIA2282332t>


How to cite:

Terzyan, Aram. 2022. "UKRAINE AMIDST THE WAR: MAIN IMPLICATIONS". Journal of Liberty and International Affairs 8 (2):332-45. <https://e-jlia.com/index.php/jlia/article/view/616>.



UKRAINE AMIDST THE WAR: MAIN IMPLICATIONS

Aram Terzyan^{1*}

¹Center for East European and Russian Studies, Eurasia Institutes - California, USA  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8439-3678>
✉ a.terzyan@eurasiainstitutes.org

Abstract: *This paper explores the challenges that Ukraine faces during the Russian invasion, focusing on the political and economic implications of the war. Apart from the humanitarian crisis, the war has produced political, economic, and social tribulations, which must be addressed. The more stubborn the Ukrainian resistance becomes, the more likely Russia will implement more aggressive tactics. Ukraine has already acknowledged its inability to join the transatlantic alliance, and recent peace talks with Russia have become more realistic and plausible for its future. Early planning of post-war recovery gained significance against this backdrop, as it proved to be successful when led by 'indigenous drivers'. While this approach placed local actors, institutions, and resources at its center, it also recognized the crucial role of external aid. This paper argues that the war is a 'resilience test' for European solidarity and the EU's crisis management competency. This paper inquires into the challenges of Ukraine's post-war recovery and concludes that national consolidation, along with Western solidarity, is critical to addressing the 'Russian problem' of Ukraine.*

Keywords: *Ukraine; Russia; War; European Union; Post-War Recovery*

INTRODUCTION

The war in Ukraine is unfolding on different battlefields. It resulted in a human toll and substantially damaged the Ukrainian economy, which is still yet to recover from the hardships caused by the pandemic. Its infrastructure, particularly its energy sector, has been completely or partially devastated. It is becoming increasingly difficult to maintain the wartime economy. The war also resulted in the fastest-growing refugee crisis, with more than 2 million Ukrainians fleeing their country within two weeks. As a result, the difficulties caused by the war are not confined to the fighting countries alone. The conflict is a major blow to the global economy due to the influx of refugees and the heavy European dependence on Russian gas. It can also be considered a 'resilience test' for European solidarity.

In the light of the evolving events, early planning of post-war politics and recovery is acquiring particular importance. Post-war politics often accentuate and perpetuate divisions rather than act as an institutional conflict resolution form. Armed conflict such as this, historically speaking, always changes power dynamics and allows certain stakeholders to rise to prominence and consolidate gains at the expense of others. At the same time, the post-war contexts present opportunities for positive reforms if stakeholders are willing to think critically about the causes

of conflict and address grievances on all sides (Eriksson and Khaleel 2019, 2). This challenging task involves addressing different, often conflicting, seemingly conflicting interests.

This paper examines the social, economic, and other hardships Ukraine faces amid the war and outlines the possible ways out from the current political, social, and economic implications.

ON THE CHALLENGES OF POST-WAR RECOVERY

Post-war countries must deal simultaneously with many challenges: preserving peace and security; reintegration of ex-combatants and returning refugees; restoration of essential infrastructure; reestablishment of private investors' confidence, etc. Beyond this, they must promote conditions that make the resumption of hostilities less likely, including by "generating employment opportunities, tackling horizontal inequalities and rent-seeking, as well as by re-establishing mechanisms to ensure the rule of law, such as transitional justice processes" (UNDP report 2008, 3).

Post-war reconstruction heavily burdens the countries themselves and the international community, facilitating and financing the transition to peace. Reconstruction involves a wide variety of international actors, ranging from the UN system to the international financial institutions (IFIs), the development organizations, bilateral and regional donors, and often a large number of non-governmental organizations (Del Castillo 2008, 1268).

Since the Second World War, the post-conflict recovery was largely led by the state or states in which the war had occurred, most often with funding from the USA or USSR. During the late 1970s and 1980s, reconstruction and recovery revolved around economic liberalization in Sudan, Egypt, Mozambique, Latin America, and elsewhere. These economic transformations were based on the premise that 'the surest foundation for peace, both within and between states, is market-democracy, a liberal democratic polity, and a market-oriented economy'. Post-conflict recovery activities in the post-cold war period became increasingly broad and deep, with disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) of former combatants and various other aspects of security sector reform as core activities in post-conflict contexts. The major transformation in post-war recovery took place after 11 September 2001. This refers to the tendency to engage in post-conflict recovery during rather than strictly following conflicts (Barakat and Zyck 2008, 1069-1086).

According to Del Castillo and Phelps (2007), economic recovery should be a priority for war-torn countries, not only because this is essential to maintaining political and social stability but also because donors are unwilling to support economic reconstruction unless countries do their part to create an environment conducive to ensuring its sustainability. Amid political, social, and institutional vulnerabilities and substantial damage to human and physical infrastructure, this is a monumental task (Del Castillo and Phelps 2007). The economic recovery is believed to have more chances to succeed based on 'indigenous drivers'. The notion of 'indigenous drivers of the economic recovery' highlights the initiatives of local communities, individuals, households, and enterprises to stimulate post-war economic activity. It locates local efforts within their socio-historical context and views them as the most viable platform to build post-war recovery and external assistance. While this approach places local actors, institutions, and

resources at its center, it also recognizes the crucial role of external aid (UNDP report 2008, 48-105).

There is also a longstanding debate regarding the economic impact of external aid on growth. In several cases (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Mozambique, Uganda, etc.), war-torn economies have become highly aid-dependent and thus provide an unsuitable model for economic reconstruction in the future. Inadequate economic policy frameworks and aid practices in Kosovo, Timor-Leste, Afghanistan, Sierra Leone, Iraq, and many other countries, have not only impeded the creation of jobs necessary to improve the wellbeing of the populations but have also failed to facilitate long-lasting peace (Del Castillo 2008, 1268). In their article 'Aid, Growth and Policies', Burnside and Dollar (2000) argue that although aid has no impact on growth, it enhances growth in good policy environments. Their definition of good policy rests on a policy index comprised of budget surplus, inflation, and trade openness. The authors show that the better the policy, the greater the impact of aid on growth, but more aid does not necessarily result in more growth. Therefore, the authors advocate prioritizing countries with good policies when allocating aid (Burnside and Dollar 2000, 847-868).

Meanwhile, reconstruction is not only about physical or economic rebuilding. It can never be fully separated from politics, and the looming choices will rarely be driven only by humanitarian or economic needs. Behind the rhetoric of benign rehabilitation lies the realpolitik of hegemonic interest (Jacoby 2007).

THE EFFECTS OF THE RUSSIAN INVASION

The war in Ukraine began on 24 February after Russian President Vladimir Putin ordered his forces to enter Ukraine. It is unfolding across multiple levels. Russia has called its actions since 24 February a 'special military operation', has denied targeting civilians in Ukraine, and said it has no plans to occupy Ukraine, which was once part of the Soviet Union under Moscow's sway (Aljazeera 2022a). In the meantime, Between 24 February and 15 March, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) recorded 1,900 civilian casualties – with 726 people killed, including 52 children – mostly caused by explosive weapons in populated areas (UN news 2022a). Three rounds of talks in Belarus have been followed by video calls between Russian and Ukrainian negotiators. Ihor Zhovkva, Zelensky's deputy chief of staff, said the talks between Russian and Ukrainian representatives have become "more constructive" (The Times of Israel 2022).

The war resulted in a human toll and significantly damaged Ukraine's economy, which is yet to recover from the hardships caused by the pandemic. Moreover, it originated at a horrible time for the world, as inflation was already rising. The President of the World Bank described the war in Ukraine as a 'catastrophe' for the world, stressing the fact that the economic impact of the war stretches beyond Ukraine's borders, and the rises in global energy prices "hit the poor the most, as does inflation" (BBC 2022a).

As to the Statement of IMF (2022) on the economic impact of war in Ukraine, "Energy and commodity prices – including wheat and other grains – have surged, adding to inflationary pressures from supply chain disruptions and the rebound from the Covid-19 pandemic (...). Seaports and airports are closed and have been damaged, many roads and bridges have been

damaged or destroyed" (IMF 2022a). It is held that the Ukrainian economy could shrink by more than a third this year if the war with Russia continues (BBC 2022b).

While it is difficult to assess the precise financial needs at this stage, it is clear that Ukraine will face high reconstruction costs. UNDP warned that if the conflict drags on - and if more support to the country is not forthcoming quickly - it could wreck almost two decades of economic progress (UN News 2022b). An estimated \$10 billion in damage to transportation infrastructure has only been recorded since the war started. Infrastructure Minister Oleksander Kubrakov said that "most damaged structures will be repaired in a year, and the most difficult ones - in two years" (Reuters 2022a). According to Kubrakov, in restoring infrastructure, Ukraine will rely on the help of the world: "Of course, this tragedy is not ours, this war is not ours - Ukraine protects the interests of the entire civilized world, we will also restore the country not alone" (Ukrinform 2022).

The Executive Board of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has already approved a disbursement of US\$1.4 billion under the Rapid Financing Instrument (RFI) to help meet urgent financing needs and mitigate the economic impact of the war (IMF 2022b). The head of the NBU, Kyrylo Shevchenko said that the territories of more than ten regions and the City of Kyiv, which accounted for more than half of the country's GDP, are currently enduring hostilities and massive shelling. Shevchenko pointed out that the impact of the war across sectors is uneven: the service sector suffered the most, while some sectors reoriented production under martial law to the production of products for the needs of the country's defense (food and textile industries, engineering, production of building materials) (Interfax Ukraine 2022). This can somehow reduce the impact of the war on the economy.

Countries with very close economic ties with Ukraine and Russia are at particular risk of scarcity and supply disruptions and are most affected by the increasing inflows of refugees (IMF 2022a). The war in Ukraine has resulted in a large-scale refugee movement. With hundreds of thousands of Ukrainians fleeing the country or joining the combat against Russia, it is extremely difficult to keep the economy going. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Filippo Grandi, described this emergency as the "fastest-growing refugee crisis" in Europe since World War II (UNHCR 2022). As of March 18, more than three million were estimated to have fled to neighboring countries. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees predicted that four million people could flee the country in the coming weeks (UNHCR Operational Data Portal 2022). Moreover, the EU estimates that there may eventually be seven million refugees (France 24 2022a). Regardless of the exact number, it is now clear that Europe will face an unprecedented challenge regarding refugees.

Most Ukrainians leave their country to flee to Poland, Moldova, Slovakia, Romania, and Hungary, which have opened their borders to refugees. However, reports of pushbacks and racial discrimination have also been recorded (The Guardian 2022a). Many non-Ukrainians of color, including Africans, Afghans, and Yemenis, have reported facing discrimination while waiting in line at the border and trying to access critical resources. While official statistics on the non-Ukrainian refugees facing such issues have not been compiled yet, many worrying reports have led to criticism from United Nations diplomats and refugee officials (Vox 2022).

Overall, the reaction from other European countries to the refugee crisis has been prompt and unified. To put that in context, it took six months for one million refugees to leave

Syria in 2013, nearly two years after that country's civil war began. The two wars occurred at different times and on different continents, but unlike the Syrians fleeing conflict, Ukrainians are finding a much warmer welcome in Europe (CNN2022). Moreover, on March 3, the European Union agreed on a temporary protection plan that allows Ukrainian refugees to stay in its Member States for three years legally. The plan, called the 'Temporary Protection Directive', was designed in the aftermath of the breakup of Yugoslavia in the 1990s to deal with large numbers of displaced persons arriving in the EU. However, it was never used (Council of the EU 2022). The Directive means that refugees from Ukraine would be offered up to three years' temporary protection in EU countries without applying for asylum, with rights to a residence permit and access to education, housing, and the labor market. The decision to use the Directive was unprecedented for the EU, and it resulted in policy shifts for many of its members. The UNHCR welcomed efforts across Europe to deal with the refugee crisis and called for its preservation throughout the coming months and, potentially, years as the violence escalates inside Ukraine (The Conversation 2022).

Beyond this, Russia's military operations have also demonstrated the vulnerability of the country's energy system and the need for resilient energy infrastructure. After disconnecting from the Belarusian and Russian electricity systems, the war made Ukraine appear as an energy island. The country was left with its electricity. On the first day of the war, Moscow's troops took over the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant, the world's worst nuclear accident site. A little more than a week later, Zaporizhzhya Nuclear Power Plant, Europe's biggest, was also attacked and overrun by the Russian army (Aljazeera 2022b). The Director-General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) expressed 'grave concern' about the security of Ukraine's nuclear sites, warning that the fundamental principles of safely operating such facilities had been violated at the two captured sites. In its statement of 6 March, the Director-General said he had been informed by Ukrainian authorities that, although regular staff continues to operate the Zaporizhzhya Nuclear Power Plant, any action of plant management requires prior approval by the Russian commander of the Russian forces that took control of the site (UN news 2022c). As the associate director for nuclear innovation at the Breakthrough Institute, Adam Stein argues, "Attacking the energy system is a particularly effective war tactic, producing widespread damage through strikes on relatively small targets" (Temple 2022). The energy sector plays a pivotal role in the existence and survival of Ukrainians. Cutting off electricity can shut down the subways, buses, and trains that citizens use to flee; flick off the lights in bomb shelters and hospitals, and spoil food and medicine. It also threatens to cut off communications, disrupt government planning, impair military defenses, and undermine morale (Temple 2022).

INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

In particular, Ukraine has been increasingly frustrated with a lack of so-called Western action during the first days of the war. The Ukrainian President has repeatedly stated that the West must do more to help his country (The Guardian 2022b). Moreover, he has accused his allies of sharing responsibility for casualties: "While Russians are to blame for the killings, responsibility is shared by those who for 13 days in their Western offices haven't been able to

approve an obviously necessary decision, who didn't save our cities from these bombs and missiles - although they can" (Aljazeera 2022a).

The United States and its Western allies have already made it clear that NATO will not back up Ukraine militarily (Aljazeera 2022c). The United States and NATO have said that implementing a no-fly zone over the country could put the alliance into a direct confrontation with Russia and lead to a full-fledged war. In general, the international strategy for deterring Russia from launching another invasion of Ukraine is to make such an intervention more costly for the Russians. After rejecting Ukraine's calls for a no-fly zone, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said more military support and more sanctions and increased humanitarian aid for Ukrainians focused on his talks at the NATO and EU headquarters (France 24 2022b).

Overall, donor countries and multilateral organizations have mobilized, extending large-scale economic assistance to Ukraine. On 1 March, the United Nations and humanitarian partners launched coordinated emergency appeals for a combined US\$1.7 billion to urgently deliver humanitarian support to people in Ukraine and refugees in neighboring countries (UN in Western Europe 2022). The World Bank Group is preparing a \$3 billion package of support for Ukraine in the coming months and additional support to neighboring countries receiving Ukrainian refugees (The World Bank Press Release 2022). The International Monetary Fund is exploring options to increase financial support to Ukraine (IMF 2022b). The Biden administration announced that it would ask Congress for \$10 billion in security, economic, and humanitarian aid for Ukraine and its neighbors. The United States is also providing over \$186 million in additional humanitarian assistance to support internally displaced persons and the more than three million refugees affected by the war in Ukraine (US Department of State 2022).

In addition to this, President Zelensky announced that special funds (in particular, the Fund for the Restoration of Destroyed Property and Infrastructure, the Fund for Economic Recovery and Transformation, the Public Debt Service and Repayment Fund, and the Small and Medium Business Support Fund) are also being formed in Ukraine, with the major task to rebuild the country after the destruction (President of Ukraine official website 2022).

To somehow overcome the energy crisis, on February 27, Ukraine applied for an emergency connection to the European energy grid - ENTSO-E (2022). Following the request by Ukrenergo and Moldova for emergency synchronization, the TSOs of Continental Europe agreed to start on March 16, 2022, the trial synchronization of the Continental European Power System with the power systems of Ukraine and Moldova (ENTSO-E official website 2022).

Another serious challenge to address is the refugee crisis, which is believed to become the fastest-growing one since World War II. Medium and long-term support will be needed to balance the needs of both refugees and host countries with financial and policy support, thereby reducing refugees' vulnerability and assisting the host countries (The Conversation 2022). There are already warnings from the refugee host governments that the aggression could spill into their countries. Poland, which hosted the largest number of refugees (over 1.7m Ukrainians), is holding its breath. It feels vulnerable on two fronts as the number of refugees coming into the country swells, and a military base near its border with Ukraine was attacked (BBC 2022c). Thus, it needs strong security guarantees to continue hosting the vast flow of Ukrainians.

The hopes of the Ukrainians for an immediate reconstruction are closely related to the EU membership. Overall, since 2014, the EU and financial Institutions (European Investment Bank

and European Bank for Reconstruction and Development) have allocated over €17 billion in grants and loans to help Ukraine stabilize its economy, carry out comprehensive reforms, to improve the lives of its citizens, as well as to mitigate the consequences of the conflict in the country's eastern regions. Four days into the war, on February 28, President Zelensky addressed the European Parliament to request the implementation of a fast-track procedure to join the European Union. Later that day, he officially signed Ukraine's application for membership. Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission, endorsed Ukraine's bid, stating, "They belong to us. They are one of us, and we want them in" (Euronews 2022). An overwhelming majority of MEPs also backed the idea with a non-binding resolution (2022), demanding Ukraine receive candidate status in line with the EU treaties and a "merit-based approach" (Euronews 2022).

Regardless of the high-level support from the European side, it is largely characterized by a symbolic nature. "Nobody entered the European Union overnight", Croatia Prime Minister Andrej Plenkovic said at the European leaders' summit in Versailles (Aljazeera 2022d). Admittedly, joining the EU is a long and complex process, requiring the unanimous agreement of all 27 Member States. In normal circumstances, any European country applying for EU membership must meet the EU Copenhagen criteria, which require a certain level of stability of state institutions, a functioning market system, and an ability to take on the obligations of membership. In this regard, formal membership in the EU seems doubtful.

First, the country has a fairly large population, and its GDP per capita is substantially below the average EU member. Furthermore, Ukraine's political conditions are even more chaotic due to its compromised territorial integrity and geopolitical volatility derived from its condition as a perpetual battleground, strong internal rivalries, and Russian troops' presence. In addition, Ukraine's score on the corruption perception index is below Thailand, El Salvador, and Egypt. Finally, Ukraine's regime still cannot be classified as a full-fledged democracy, a nominal obstacle to join the EU (Geopolitical Monitor 2022).

The perspective of hasty membership seems rather unrealistic when considering the EU's internal problems. In addition, the EU itself suffers a lot from the ongoing war. The war in Ukraine is the third asymmetric shock, as economists call it, that the Union faced in the last two decades after the 2008 financial and economic crisis and the following Eurozone crisis and the Covid-19 pandemic. The war is a real 'burden' for neighboring countries due to the refugees' influx and heavy dependence on Russian gas (EEAS 2022). Even granting Ukraine with candidate-status seems to be too ambitious amidst the war, with a potential to deepen the economic and energy crisis on the continent.

In the meantime, EU Member States' increase in defense spending shows that the EU is emerging as a security actor on the geopolitical chessboard. With NATO membership not currently realistic, Europe identifies certain alternatives to provide Ukraine with security guarantees. The 'European Peace Facility', established in March 2021, is an off-budget instrument designed to fill financial gaps in the EU's Common Security and Defense Policy and support partner countries bilaterally in military and defense matters. The instrument will provide €500 million to equip Ukraine with arms, including lethal weapons.

This is a radical paradigm shift in the EU's foreign policy. The title 'Peace Facility' might appear misleading, as the instrument is used for the first time to fund lethal weapons and to

ship them into a war zone. It results from the ambitious EU's Global Strategy from 2016 and the preceding policy discourse between the EU and its Member States on making the EU a global player rather than only being a global payer (ECDPM commentary 2022).

Currently, Russia insists on a neutral status for Ukraine with its limited army, similar to Austria, as a compromise in peace talks with Kyiv (Reuters 2022b). Putin had spoken in February about neutrality and security guarantees for Ukraine without NATO enlargement as one possible variant. However, the Ukrainian presidency said it rejected proposals of neutrality models based on Austria or Sweden. Ukraine "is now in a direct state of war with Russia. As a result, the model can only be 'Ukrainian' and only on legally verified security guarantees", its top negotiator Mikhaïlo Podolyak said in comments published by Zelensky's office (Aljazeera 2022e). In the meantime, there are some indications of a possible diplomatic path constructed on the idea of neutrality. Zelensky told European leaders gathered in London on March 15 that he realizes NATO has no intention of accepting Ukraine (The Times of Israel 2022). At the same time, the Ukrainian foreign minister Dmytro Kuleba said on Thursday: "The real issue for Ukraine is hard security guarantees, similar to the ones that members of NATO have" (Financial Times 2022). The Russian side announced that it is ready to provide security guarantees: "We want Ukraine to stay neutral(...) We are ready to talk about security guarantees for the Ukrainian state and security guarantees for the European state, and of course, for the security of Russia. Judging from President Zelensky's statements, he is starting to understand this approach; it makes us cautiously optimistic" (Financial Times 2022), said Sergei Lavrov, Russian foreign minister. Russia's vision of neutrality for Ukraine will mean a Moscow-friendly government in Kyiv that defers the Kremlin in domestic and foreign policies.

CONCLUSION

Admittedly, the war in Ukraine has dramatically affected the lives of thousands of people and produced numerous social, economic, and other hardships that will take years to recover. The longer and more stubborn the Ukrainian resistance is, the more likely it is to use more aggressive tactics by Russia. The physical and human infrastructure has already been hit very hard, and the devastation is far from over. Zelensky has already acknowledged that Ukraine has no perspective on becoming a NATO member, and the fourth round of peace talks with Russia appears to be more plausible. Meanwhile, Ukraine is still seeking security guarantees within the 'neutral status' option proposed by the Kremlin as a compromise.

The war presents a real economic catastrophe for Ukraine, which is expected to shrink by more than a third this year if it continues. Not only does the Ukrainian economy, but the entire global economy feels the effects of slower growth and increasing inflation. In addition to the alarming economic decline, the war has also demonstrated the vulnerability of Ukraine's infrastructure, in the particular energy sector, which is decisive for the living and survival of Ukrainians. Another challenge posed stems from a large-scale refugee crisis, which requires average and long-term support to balance the needs of both refugees and host countries.

Against this backdrop, early planning of post-war recovery is of crucial importance. The process should largely be based on 'indigenous drivers', involving local communities, individuals, households, and enterprises. At the same time, given the significant damage caused by the war,

substantial external support will also be required. This refers to financial assistance and the enhancement of Ukraine's internal resilience for resisting external challenges in the long run.

The unprecedented decisions of the West amid the war suggest that the major role in the reconstruction process will be attributed to the EU. The Western response is increasingly becoming prompter and more unified. This is particularly evident concerning the refugee crisis, where the West has demonstrated high-level coordination and unity. No more than ever, the West is determined to bolster European economic resilience, drastically reduce energy dependence on Russia, and strengthen the European defense system. How the West handles the Ukrainian issue in the coming period will be vital to the future of common European security and foreign policy.

COMPLIANCE WITH ETHICAL STANDARDS

Acknowledgments:

Not applicable.

Funding:

Not applicable.

Statement of human rights:

This article does not contain any studies with human participants performed by any authors.

Statement on the welfare of animals:

This article does not contain any studies with animals performed by any authors.

Informed consent:

Not applicable.

REFERENCES

1. Aljazeera. 2022a. "Zelensky: Western Nations Share 'Responsibility' for Casualties," available at: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/3/8/zelenskyy-accuses-west-for-contributing-to-killings-in-ukraine> (25 March 2022).
2. Aljazeera. 2022b. "Is a Nuclear Disaster Likely in Ukraine?" available at: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/3/17/is-a-nuclear-disaster-likely-in-ukraine> (25 March 2022).
3. Aljazeera. 2022c. "Russia-Ukraine: What is a No-Fly Zone and Why Has NATO Said No," available at: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/3/7/russia-ukraine-what-is-no-fly-zone-why-has-nato-said-no> (25 March 2022).
4. Aljazeera. 2022d. "'No fast track': EU dashes Ukraine's hopes of quick membership" available at: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/3/11/eu-dashes-ukraines-hopes-of-quick-membership> (25 March 2022).
5. Aljazeera. 2022e. "Talk of 'compromise' as Russia-Ukraine peace talks set to resume," available at: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/3/16/russia-says-parts-of-a-ukraine-compromise-deal-are-close> (25 March 2022).
6. Barakat, Sultan, and Steven A. Zyck. 2009. "The evolution of post-conflict recovery." *Third world quarterly* 30.6: 1069-1086.
7. BBC. 2022a. "Ukraine War is Economic Catastrophe, Warns World Bank," available at: <https://www.bbc.com/news/business-60610537> (25 March 2022).
8. BBC. 2022b. "IMF: Ukraine economy could shrink as much as 35%," available at: <https://www.bbc.com/news/business-60743592> (25 March 2022).
9. BBC. 2022c. "Ukraine war: Fears Russian aggression could spill into Poland," available at: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-60746437> (25 March 2022).
10. Burnside, Craig, and David Dollar. 2009. "Aid, policies, and growth." *American economic review* 90.4: 847-868.
11. CNN. 2022. "How the Ukraine war revealed Europe's selective empathy on refugees," available at: <https://edition.cnn.com/2022/03/16/middleeast/mideast-summary-03-16-2022-intl/index.html> (25 March 2022).
12. Council of the EU. 2022. Ukraine: Council unanimously introduces temporary protection for persons fleeing the war. Press Release, available at: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2022/03/04/ukraine-council-introduces-temporary-protection-for-persons-fleeing-the-war/> (25 March 2022).
13. Council of the EU. 2022b. EU adopts new set of measures to respond to Russia's military aggression against Ukraine, available at: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2022/02/28/eu-adopts-new-set-of-measures-to-respond-to-russia-s-military-aggression-against-ukraine/?fbclid=IwAR2JokzdDRfBPatg-a3xYtype9OG8UW-ZN87Sb4I0LZDo5bFDNdo7Zdf2hM> (25 March 2022).
14. Del Castillo, Graciana. 2008. "Economic Reconstruction of War-Torn Countries: The Role of International Financial Institutions." *Seton Hall L. Rev.* 38: 1265.
15. Del Castillo, G. and Phelps, E. 2007. "The Road to Post-War Recovery." *Project Syndicate*.

16. EEAS. 2022. "The War in Ukraine and Its Implications for the EU," available at: [https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/112754/war-ukraine-and-its-implications-eu_en\(25 March 2022\)](https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/112754/war-ukraine-and-its-implications-eu_en(25%20March%202022)).
17. ENTSO-E official website. 2022. "Request for emergency synchronization of Ukrainian power system to Continental Europe power system," available at: [https://www.entsoe.eu/news/2022/02/28/28-february-2022-request-for-emergency-synchronisation-of-ukrainian-power-system-to-continental-europe-power-system/\(25 March 2022\)](https://www.entsoe.eu/news/2022/02/28/28-february-2022-request-for-emergency-synchronisation-of-ukrainian-power-system-to-continental-europe-power-system/(25%20March%202022)).
18. Eriksson, Jacob. and Khaleel, Ahmed. 2019. *"Iraq After ISIS: The Challenges of Post-War Recovery."* US: Palgrave Macmillan.
19. Euronews.2022. "Ukraine is pushing for EU membership. But what are the real chances?" available at: [https://www.euronews.com/my-europe/2022/03/01/ukraine-is-pushing-for-eu-membership-but-what-are-the-real-chances\(25 March 2022\)](https://www.euronews.com/my-europe/2022/03/01/ukraine-is-pushing-for-eu-membership-but-what-are-the-real-chances(25%20March%202022)).
20. European Commission. "European Neighborhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations: Ukraine," available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/european-neighbourhood-policy/countries-region/ukraine_en \(25 March 2022\)](https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/european-neighbourhood-policy/countries-region/ukraine_en%20(25%20March%202022)).
21. Financial Times. 2022. "What Neutrality Would Mean for Ukraine, Russia and the War," available at: [https://www.ft.com/content/714f74fa-08de-4085-99ac-5f786feb47ad\(25 March 2022\)](https://www.ft.com/content/714f74fa-08de-4085-99ac-5f786feb47ad(25%20March%202022)).
22. France 24. 2022a. "Russian invasion risks displacing more than 7 million Ukrainians, says EU crisis commissioner," available at: [https://www.france24.com/en/europe/20220227-europe-must-prepare-for-millions-of-ukrainian-refugees-eu-commissioner-says\(25 March 2022\)](https://www.france24.com/en/europe/20220227-europe-must-prepare-for-millions-of-ukrainian-refugees-eu-commissioner-says(25%20March%202022)).
23. France 24. 2022b. "Blinken Defends Sanctions Tactic, Warns of More Ukraine Suffering," available at: [https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20220304-blinken-defends-sanctions-tactic-warns-of-more-ukraine-suffering\(25 March 2022\)](https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20220304-blinken-defends-sanctions-tactic-warns-of-more-ukraine-suffering(25%20March%202022)).
24. Geopolitical Monitor. 2022. "The Geoeconomic Front of the Ukraine War," available at: [https://www.geopoliticalmonitor.com/the-geoeconomic-front-of-the-ukraine-war/\(25 March 2022\)](https://www.geopoliticalmonitor.com/the-geoeconomic-front-of-the-ukraine-war/(25%20March%202022)).
25. Hauck, Volker. 2022. The European Peace Facility and Ukraine: Implications for Africa-Europe Relations. *ECDPM commentary*, available at: [https://ecdpm.org/talking-points/european-peace-facility-ukraine-implications-africa-europe-relations/\(25 March 2022\)](https://ecdpm.org/talking-points/european-peace-facility-ukraine-implications-africa-europe-relations/(25%20March%202022)).
26. IMF. 2022a. "IMF Staff Statement on the Economic Impact of War in Ukraine. Press Release no. 22/61," available at: [https://www.imf.org/en/News/Articles/2022/03/05/pr2261-imf-staff-statement-on-the-economic-impact-of-war-in-ukraine\(25 March 2022\)](https://www.imf.org/en/News/Articles/2022/03/05/pr2261-imf-staff-statement-on-the-economic-impact-of-war-in-ukraine(25%20March%202022)).
27. IMF. 2022b. "IMF Executive Board Approves US\$ 1.4 Billion in Emergency Financing Support to Ukraine," available at: [https://www.imf.org/en/News/Articles/2022/03/09/pr2269-ukraine-imf-executive-board-approves-usd-billion-in-emergency-financing-support-to-ukraine\(25 March 2022\)](https://www.imf.org/en/News/Articles/2022/03/09/pr2269-ukraine-imf-executive-board-approves-usd-billion-in-emergency-financing-support-to-ukraine(25%20March%202022)).

28. Interfax Ukraine. 2022. "Ukraine's losses from destruction due to Russian invasion reach \$100 bln - presidential adviser," available at: <https://ua.interfax.com.ua/news/general/811081.html>(25 March 2022).
29. Jacoby, Tim. 2007. "Hegemony, modernisation and post-war reconstruction." *Global Society* 21.4: 521-537.
30. Narea, Nicole and Elidrissi, Rajaa. 2022. "Why It's More Difficult to Flee Ukraine If You Are Not from Ukraine." *VOX*, available at: <https://www.vox.com/22962300/ukraine-russia-refugee-racism>(25 March 2022).
31. President of Ukraine's official website. 2022. "President: Special funds are being formed for the reconstruction of Ukraine after the war," available at: <https://www.president.gov.ua/en/news/prezident-formuyutsya-specialni-fondi-dlya-vidbudovi-ukrayin-73381>(25 March 2022).
32. Reuters. 2022a. "Ukrainian Minister Puts War Damage to Infrastructure at About \$10 Billion," available at: <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/ukrainian-minister-puts-war-damage-infrastructure-about-10-billion-2022-03-07/>(25 March 2022).
33. Reuters. 2022b. "Moscow and Kyiv see signs of compromise on Ukraine's security status," available at: <https://www.reuters.com/world/kremlin-says-demilitarised-ukraine-like-austria-is-possible-compromise-2022-03-16/>(25 March 2022).
34. Temple, James. 2022. "How Ukraine Could Keep the Lights on as Russia Attacks its Power Supplies." *MIT Technology Review*, available at: <https://www.technologyreview.com/2022/03/07/1046839/how-ukraine-could-keep-the-lights-on-as-russia-attacks-its-power-supplies/>(25 March 2022).
35. The Conversation. 2022. "The Ukrainian Refugee Crisis Could Last Years – but Host Communities Might not be Prepared," available at: <https://theconversation.com/the-ukrainian-refugee-crisis-could-last-years-but-host-communities-might-not-be-prepared-178482>(25 March 2022).
36. The Guardian. 2022a. "As 1.3 Million People Flee, Ukraine's Refugee Crises is only Just Beginning," available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2022/mar/05/ukrainians-head-west-as-un-warns-refugee-crisis-is-only-just-beginning> (25 March 2022).
37. The Guardian. 2022b. "Ukraine is facing humanitarian crisis amid relentless Russian missile attacks," available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/mar/02/ukraine-cities-bombardment-russia-attack-kyiv-kharkiv-russian-war-invasion>(25 March 2022).
38. The New York Times. 2022. "Biden Administration Asks Congress for \$10 billion to Support Ukraine," available at: <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/03/world/europe/biden-congress-ukraine.html>(25 March 2022).
39. The Times of Israel. 2022. "Russia Said to Ease Stance at Talks, Zelensky Says Ukraine Accepts Not Joining NATO," available at: <https://www.timesofisrael.com/russia-said-to-ease-stance-at-talks-zelensky-says-ukraine-accepts-not-joining-nato/>(25 March 2022).
40. The World Bank Press Release. "2022. World Bank Mobilizes an Emergency Financing Package of Over \$700 million for Ukraine," available at:

- <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2022/03/07/world-bank-mobilizes-an-emergency-financing-package-of-over-700-million-for-ukraine>(25 March 2022).
41. Ukrinform. 2022. "Infrastructure Ministry estimates losses from Russian aggression," available at: <https://www.ukrinform.net/rubric-ato/3423401-infrastructure-ministry-estimates-losses-from-russian-aggression.html>(25 March 2022).
 42. UN in Western Europe. 2022. UN Agencies Deliver Humanitarian Aid in Ukraine, available at: <https://unric.org/en/un-agencies-deliver-humanitarian-aid-in-ukraine/>(25 March 2022).
 43. UN News. 2022a. "Ukraine: Civilian death toll demands full investigation and accountability, Security Council told," available at: <https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/03/1114182>(25 March 2022).
 44. UN News. 2022b. "Ukraine war: \$100 billion in infrastructure damage and counting," available at: <https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/03/1114022> (25 March 2022).
 45. UN news. 2022c. "Russian military control of Ukraine nuclear plants cause for grave concern, nuclear energy agency warns," available at: <https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/03/1113382>(25 March 2022).
 46. UNDP report. 2008. "Post-Conflict Economic Recovery: Enabling Local Ingenuity. Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery." Crisis Prevention and Recovery Report. United Nations Development Programme.
 47. UNHCR Operational Data Portal. 2022. "Ukraine Refugee Situation," available at: <http://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine>(25 March 2022).
 48. US Department of State. 2022. Additional Humanitarian Assistance for the People of Ukraine, available at: <https://www.state.gov/additional-humanitarian-assistance-for-the-people-of-ukraine/>(25 March 2022).

Copyright © 2022 The author/s

This work is licensed under a CC-BY 3.0 license

(*) Corresponding author

Peer review method: Double-blind

Received: 04.04.2022

Accepted: 25.04.2022

Published: 14.06.2022

Thematic section: *Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine*

Review article

DOI: <https://www.doi.org/10.47305/JLIA2282346a>

How to cite:

Adi Odey, Stephen, and Samuel Akpan Bassey. 2022. "UKRAINIAN FOREIGN POLICY TOWARD RUSSIA BETWEEN 1991 AND 2004: THE START OF THE CONFLICT". *Journal of Liberty and International Affairs* 8 (2):346-61. <https://e-jlia.com/index.php/jlia/article/view/617>.



UKRAINIAN FOREIGN POLICY TOWARD RUSSIA BETWEEN 1991 AND 2004: THE START OF THE CONFLICT

Stephen Adi Odey¹, Samuel Akpan Bassey^{2*}

¹Department of Sociology University of Calabar, Cross River, Nigeria  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3369-7196> ✉ adiodey@unical.edu.ng

²Department of Philosophy, University of Calabar, Cross River, Nigeria  <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1790-4682> ✉ samuelbassey15@yahoo.com

Abstract: *After the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, Ukraine's foreign policy evolved in the geopolitical sphere of Central and Eastern Europe. As a result, the new Ukrainian interests were built on a sense of national identity. They looked to Russia and Europe to find a sense of national identity. However, Ukraine's Eurasian and Central-European ancestry caused a distinct rift in society about national identity, which influenced the formulation of foreign policy. Those trying to co-exist with Russia find it difficult to develop a Ukrainian identity completely different from Russia, justifying the togetherness through the Pereyaslav agreement. On the contrary, the nationalist-minded Ukrainians, those who want to cultivate an identity distinct from the Russians and, more specifically, look for a Central-European identity, try to influence the course of the foreign policy formation of Ukraine by citing their historicity of Europeanness with the medieval principedom of Kiev and viewing the Pereyaslav memory as disastrous for Ukraine's independent existence. Thus, national identity is one of the main causes of the Ukrainian-Russian conflict. This study aims to uncover significant events in Ukrainian foreign policy toward Russia that led to modern-day conflict.*

Keywords: *Ukraine; Russia; Foreign Policy; USSR; Identity*

INTRODUCTION

In many ways, the fall of the Soviet Union changed the bounds of Ukrainian-Russian contact. Their relationship was thrown into the unfamiliar framework of 'foreign policy', and conflicts on various topics occurred. During the presidency of Leonid Kravchuk (the first President of Ukraine), issues ranging from international debt repayment to energy supply, from the future of the Black Sea Fleet to the division of former Soviet property, from the shape of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) to control and ownership of nuclear weapons dominated the Ukraine-Russian relationship, dominated their bilateral relations in the ensuing years (D'Anieri 2019). Renunciation of all links with Russia and a new westward orientation were critical factors in Ukraine's establishment of its own identity. Regardless of the various sources of threats identified in Ukraine, Russia was considered a severe security threat to Ukrainian independence. Ukrainian analysts viewed integration into the European Union as a highly appealing option. However, geopolitical circumstances prompted Ukraine not to isolate itself

from Russia entirely. Eastern Ukraine prefers a greater alliance with Russia, and the approaching economic catastrophe in Ukraine necessitates a deeper partnership with Russia.

As Ukraine was faced with the urgent task of preserving and consolidating its only economically feasible trade and industrial links with Russia, a realistic assessment of the Ukrainian economic situation called for a more pragmatic foreign policy agenda. In contrast to his predecessor, President Leonid Kuchma reshaped relations between Russia and Ukraine from confrontational idealism to economic pragmatism. His realistic approach to foreign policy marked a new era in the Ukraine-Russia relationship. The endorsement of a pragmatic approach in Kiev was matched by a remarkable change of attitude in Moscow. At the end of Ukraine's third year of independence, Russia was forced to accept the reality that Ukraine was developing into a fully sovereign state. As Ukraine represents an area of Russia's vital interests, it also tried to establish relations with Ukraine of stable, conflict-free, and mutually non-provocative cooperation as an alternative to a competitive partnership. Ukraine also no longer looked upon economic cooperation with Russia and the CIS as an unfortunate necessity but as an urgent requirement. Ukrainian leaders softened their policy on Crimea and the Black Sea Fleet (BSF) to get economic resources from Russia. Soon, it became an associate member of the CIS Economic Union, and the willingness of Kuchma to stay engaged in the CIS enabled Ukraine to continue obtaining economic resources from Russia. The signing of the treaty of 'Friendship, Cooperation, and Partnership' between Ukraine and the Russian Federation on 31 May 1997, solved the dispute over the Black Sea Fleet and became an important landmark in the ties between the countries, opening up "a new age in the history of the Ukraine-Russia relationship" and laying a firm foundation for the further development of mutually beneficial cooperation (Grant 2015).

Ukraine became closer to Russia over time due to a lack of economic reform and a decline in the availability of Western economic resources. Their cooperation was further enhanced when Ukraine boosted its involvement in the CIS Anti-Terrorist Center and chose pro-Russian Viktor Yanukovych as Prime Minister in November 2002. Despite disagreements on a wide range of issues, including economic, political, and, most importantly, security issues, Russia and Ukraine were able to work out their differences, and the Ukraine-Russia partnership remained positive and less confrontational, in contrast to the period from 1994 to 2004 (Miller and Toritsyn 2005). Despite Ukraine's fear of an imperial Russia, nationalists' strong opposition to developing close relations with it, and its desire for Euro-Atlantic integration, Ukraine developed good relations with Russia.

Thus, this paper will analyze Ukrainian foreign policy toward Russia and how a larger crisis emerged.

UKRAINE-RUSSIA RELATIONSHIP AND THE EXISTENCE OF FEAR FACTOR: A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Before and after independence, Ukraine's relations with Russia were always guided by the fear factor, as Ukraine perceived Russia as a threat to its independent existence. The Ukrainian historical memory of Pereyaslav led to a long series of disasters, such as the defeat of the Cossack leader Mazepa at Poltava in 1709; the liquidation of independent Cossack institutions later in the eighteenth century; Tsar Alexander II's Ems Decree of 1876 that banned

virtually all publications in Ukrainian; and the Ukrainian famine of the early 1930s, created on Stalin's order (Morrison 1993), urges them to maintain a distance from Russia. Furthermore, the Russian elites' post-independence political behavior, such as a lack of respect for Ukrainian independence, territorial claims against Ukraine, and direct involvement in numerous nationalistic conflicts inside and outside its borders (Alexandrova 1994), compelled the Ukrainian leadership to close their doors to Russia firmly. However, the traditional version of Russian history fails to see Ukraine as a separate entity different from Russia. For Russians, at best, Ukrainians are 'younger brothers', junior shareholders in the Russian empire rather than its victims (Morrison 1993). Ukraine and Russia see their relationship differently from their respective perspectives discussed below.

Ukraine's View of the Relationship

Before 1648, Ukraine was part of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, whose eastern frontier extended to the East of the Dnieper River. After the Pereyaslav agreement of 1654, a part of that vast territory (today's regions of Polotova and Chemihiv with the city of Kiev) came under the rule of the Tsar in Moscow, where Ukraine was known as Little Russia and its subjects as Little Russians in the Russian empire (Ploky 2017). In addition to being the autocrat of Great Russia, the Tsar also became the sovereign of Little Russia. Nevertheless, Little Russia did not thereby become part of Russia in the modern national sense. This Little Russia, a pre-modern or historic Ukrainian Cossack nation, retained its government, laws, and institutions after acceptance under the Tsar's specter for at least a century. When the nation-building project of Russia called for the elimination of Little Russia's separate identity, it was precisely in the final decade of Little Russia's autonomous existence that its rights began to be defended in a language revealing a modern conception of the nation (Szporluk 1997). However, before the Ukrainians put forward their national agenda, Russia's nation and state-building were already underway in ways that had ramifications for those we may call the Ukrainian subjects of the empire. Especially during the Russian Catherine II's reign (1762–1796), St. Petersburg held the view that the elimination of Little Russia's traditional institutions was just one element of a larger state and nation-building project and thus required a variety of measures, the main aim of which was to achieve the complete integration of Little Russia into the Russian state and Russian society (Lowish 2021).

The construction of a Russian identity, which included the construction of national history, built around the idea of a state distinguished by a thousand-year-old history, was first formulated in connection with Ukraine being incorporated into Russia after 1654 (Bureiko and Moga 2019). This corollary was to disinherit the Ukrainians from any claim to historic statehood and, thereby, deny them any future claim to independent statehood. The Russians further embellished their history by granting later to the grand principality of Moscow the claim of the sole legitimate and direct successor of Kiev - first by invoking dynastic and religious arguments and then, in the age of ethnic nationalism, by claiming an ethnic identity between the modern Russian nation and the state of Kievan Rus (862-1242), denying any legitimacy as Kiev's heirs to other polities that functioned in the post-Kiev space. As ethnic nationalism intensified throughout XIX century Europe, this operation was carried one step further. The Great Russians

declared themselves to be the real Russians. At the same time, the Ukrainians and Byelorussians were viewed either as junior branches of the Russian family or as Russians corrupted by foreign influences (Szporluk 2020).

This imperial version of the Russian nation, which was defined by its confrontation with the West, had important domestic implications for the status of Little Russian history and society. However, Catherine's Little Russia was aware and took pride in being a child of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Its defenders also asserted their right against the empire by invoking Little Russia's past ties with the Commonwealth (Hillis 2013). Furthermore, the construction of Ukrainian national history that 'seceded' from the imperial version of Russian history include the declaration of a link of continuity in political tradition between Little Russia, itself a direct product of the Cossack association with the Commonwealth on the one hand, and Kievan Rus on the other. The defense of Little Russia was expressed in works of literature, theater, and historical, philosophical, and other research.

In this regard, the Ukrainian national poet Taras Shevchenko's (1814-1861) role was noticeable as he began to see the political significance of his native culture and nationalized it by making its language a medium of artistic expression (Glaser 2017). In due course of time, this literary separatism necessarily implied political separatism with the idea that Ukrainian society, a nation, matched with that literature. However, the Russians did not understand that Shevchenko represented a qualitatively new stage in the formation of Ukraine and the decline of Little Russia. Interestingly enough, as the Ukrainians were operating in the bipolar Russian-Polish world, some Poles gradually accepted the emergence of a Ukrainian nation. However, the Russians continued to regard them as their province. Soon after, Russians saw the connection between the Polish and Ukrainian situations. St. Petersburg determined that the Ukrainian movement resulted from a Polish scheme to dismember the Russian people in Ukraine. The first limits on the use of the Ukrainian language were imposed in 1863 by the so-called Valuyev Ukaz, named for the minister of interior (Hosking 2012). The government, which had the support of a major portion of the people in this regard, judged that the Ukrainian phenomenon was harmful, even though Ukrainians, unlike Poles, confined their activity to literary and scientific interests.

In the XX century, when the formation of modern Ukraine intensified, in the same fashion as the tsarist state, the Soviet occupation crushed the national aspirations of the Ukrainians, characterized by oppression and inhumanity. From the beginning of the Russian revolution of 1917 to 1921 (when Russian Communist party control had been established in Ukraine and was active), the period witnessed the Ukrainian liberation war. Ukraine politically and physically fought for its independence and rights of self-determination against the Russian Communist Party and Red Army (Skirda 2014). However, the call for Ukrainian independence and separation caused great concern for the provisional government and Bolshevik leadership. A reevaluation of the benefits of keeping Ukraine under the Petrograd (and Moscow after 1918) justification meant that there was a strong organized opposition force in the Bolshevik party determined not to lose such a "pearl of Russia" (Chumachenko 2008).

In 1922, the situation was such that there was Soviet Ukraine and Polish-controlled Western Ukraine, and both these areas were ruled by occupational powers that had used force to get what they wanted and had then signed treaties with one another, giving the appearance that all was in order (Gardner 2015). The West indirectly acknowledged and ratified this partition

and occupation of Ukraine by giving Poland sovereignty over Eastern Galicia in March 1923. On the other hand, Soviet Ukraine was left in 1923, having signed two union treaties (8 December 1920 and 30 December 1923) confirming that it was a member of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (Rothschild 2017). However, Stalin was determined to deny Ukraine's right to self-determination and denied that Ukraine had a national question or problem. This denial, often supported by the use of force, convinced the Soviet leadership that anti-Soviet and counter-revolutionary nationalistic elements in Ukraine were being oppressed to secure the essential well-being of the Soviet Union (Sullivant 1962). After independence from Soviet rule in December 1991, Russia's imperialistic revisionist policies also worried Ukrainians, as Russian politicians both in and out of office have either rejected or shown insufficient respect for Ukrainian independence (Bukkvoll 1997). The political and cultural elites have found it difficult to accept that Ukraine is an independent state and no longer a part of Russia.

For many others, including Russian Vice-President Alexander Rutskoi, Yeltsin's recognition of the independence of Ukraine was a betrayal, and the loss of Crimea, Sevastopol, Odesa, and other areas was unacceptable to the Russians (Morrison 1993). In May 1992, the Russian Supreme Soviet declared the 1954 decision to transfer Crimea to Ukraine illegal. In December 1992, the Congress of People's Deputies empowered the Supreme Soviet to consider the status of Sevastopol. A summer 1994 survey of the deputies in the Russian Duma also revealed that only 3.5 percent thought Crimea should belong to Ukraine (Morrison 1993). The deputy speaker of the Russian Supreme Soviet, Valentin Agatonov, in 1993 sent the Crimean parliament a letter stating that he was convinced that "no tricks or nationalistic babble can tear apart the historical blood-bonds between the people of Russia and Crimea" (Morrison 1993, 70). The most provocative step came in July 1993, when the Supreme Soviet claimed that Sevastopol was henceforth under Russian jurisdiction. As far as territorial integrity and borders are concerned, the Russian position was that it would respect the borders between the two countries, whereas Ukraine wanted the Russians to accept the borders (Morrison 1993).

Russia has also indicated that borders within the CIS should be regarded as only administrative guarded with minimum control and that common CIS borders troops should guard the borders with non-CIS countries. However, these are unacceptable and worrisome for Ukraine. Furthermore, nationalist Russian politicians and even the Russian legislature tried to keep Ukraine within their sphere of influence by using political, economic, and security means to revive its past glory. Using the political means, Russia continued to regard the CIS as the way to integrate former Soviet territory, be it in the form of a confederation, federation, or a union, and decided to become the key element of the CIS. For Russia, the creation of the CIS meant not liquidating the old center but the transfer of that center from Moscow as the Soviet capital to Moscow as the Russian capital (Crescenzi and Jaax 2017). Because of Ukraine's close links with and economic dependence on the former Soviet republics, especially Russia, and as it wanted to bring crucial socio-economic reforms, which must be carried out in close cooperation with these states, Russia used the economic means to keep Ukraine within its sphere of influence. Eighty percent of Ukraine's industrial production did not constitute a complete technological cycle inside the country's border (Bukkvoll 1997). The majority of the items needed for industrial production came from Russia. As Ukraine has depended upon Russia for oil and gas deliveries, Russia has a more convenient and flexible foreign policy tool in temporarily stopping or limiting

the supplies. Therefore, Ukraine has found itself under the threat of Russia's suspension of deliveries. In addition to this, the Ukrainian debt to Russia for oil and gas supply, which has risen steadily since independence, has further weakened the Ukrainian position (Bukkvoll 1997). For instance, in the summer of 1993, Russia tried to get Kravchuk to give up Ukraine's share of the Black Sea Fleet in turn for a reduction in the debt, and in 1994, the Russian oil and gas company Gazprom also wanted to take over parts of the Ukrainian pipeline system in exchange for debt reduction (Felgenhauer 1999).

Apart from this, Russia also tried to keep Ukraine within its axis through cooperation within the CIS by transforming the CIS Economic Union into a single Eurasian Economic Space, which has provisions to prohibit members of the CIS Economic Union from becoming members of other countries' economic and custom unions. Similarly, Russia attempted to integrate former Soviet territory by forming a military defense union within the framework of the CIS, with its self-appointed role as the CIS states' military policeman (Felgenhauer 1999). In the domain of culture and language, the Ukrainians also feel threatened. Ukrainians of nationalist persuasion worry that Russia's and Western penetration in the Ukrainian informational space is excessive and threatens ethnic Ukrainian cultural revitalization. Vasil Lyzanchuk, a professor of journalism at Lviv State University, expresses his sentiment about the continuing presence of Russia in Ukraine's informational space. To him:

Imperial and post-imperial means of mass communication (...) disgrace the Ukrainian state, its symbols, language, culture, traditions, and customs. In order to demoralize the spirit of national rebirth (...) [new Russian chauvinist], hiding behind the principles of freedom of speech and pluralistic thought, foist the thought that the Ukrainian people are disappointed with independence because it was a result of the disintegration of the USSR that life worsened, the mafia came to power, corruption developed, crime was unleashed to no limit, and a terrible social explosion will soon come (Shulman 1998, 297).

Another writer fears that Russian informational imperialism in the contest of undeveloped Ukrainian mass media will lead to the "erosion of the Ukrainian ethnocultural organism" and the "denationalization" of Ukraine (Shulman 1998, 297). Nationalist party leaders also consistently argued that Russian television, radio, and newspapers were 'anti-Ukrainian', giving misinformation about the new Ukrainian state and ridiculing its culture and politics. It is not only the allegedly anti-Ukrainian ideas that accompany Russian mass media penetration of Ukraine that are worrisome to Ukrainian nationalists but the presence of the Russian language itself (Shulman 1998). Finally, nationalists believe that through informational ties with Ukraine, Russia provides ideological and propagandistic assistance to anti-Ukrainian ethnic Russians living in Ukraine. Those mentioned above, the century-old imperial nature of Russia and its leaders' post-independence (1991-on) revisionist imperial attitude make Ukrainian leaders feel threatened. Therefore, despite the formal overthrow of Moscow's domination of Ukraine, the perceived threat of neo-colonial political, military, economic, and cultural domination over the new Ukrainian state promoted strong resistance toward Russia.

Due to the above, any Ukrainian leader who signs an agreement with Russia is immediately seen as risking a political surrender of independence on the pattern of 1654 (Trenin

2011). The result is a permanent inferiority complex and a lack of confidence in negotiating with Moscow. A fear that any deal with Russia is a potential trap, however favorable to Ukraine its terms might appear. In December 1991, when Kravchuk held his first news conference in Kiev after signing the tripartite agreement to establish the CIS largely on Ukrainian terms, he was accused of following in Khmelnytsky's footsteps and giving away Ukraine's sovereignty (Potichnyj 1991). History tells Ukrainians that promises made by Russia are always broken, which leads to the widespread unspoken assumption that Ukraine is also entitled to break its pledges when it sees fit. Consequently, the Ukrainian debate over nuclear weapons has been dominated by the widespread belief that any security guarantees offered by Russia to a non-nuclear Ukraine will be as worthless as the Tsar's promises in 1654 (Potichnyj 1991). As one commentator in a Kiev newspaper wrote:

With regards to Russian guarantees, we have heard enough fairy-tails. In the course of history, neither the Moscow state nor the Russian empire ever kept any of their promises (...) the most reliable Ukrainian history studies published in the West testify that developed economic relations and democratic institutions could not guarantee security and did not prevent the Moscow state from enslaving Ukraine after the so-called Pereyaslav agreement in the middle of the seventeenth century (Morrison 1993, 680).

Not surprisingly, the perception of Russia as a potential invader and enemy has made any search for common interests with Moscow exceptionally difficult. Relations with Moscow are perceived as a zero-sum game. Any sign of military weakness, or the slightest false diplomatic move, could put Ukraine's hard-won independent statehood at risk (Morrison 1993, 680).

Thus, Ukraine firmly closed its doors toward Russia and took a pro-Western orientation in its foreign policy as a policy measure. Keeping in mind the Russian position and intention to dominate in the CIS, Ukraine did not become a full member of the CIS by insisting on its independent position. Ukraine also did not accede to the CIS Inter-parliamentary Assembly in March 1992, the CIS Collective Security Act (The Tashkent Treaty) in May 1992, or the CIS Charter in February 1993. Finally, distrust of the CIS was formalized as the official Ukrainian strategy in the document 'Fundamental Guidelines in Ukrainian Foreign Policy' adopted by the parliament on 2 July 1993 (Rozanov and Dovgan 2010). This document includes the statement: "Ukraine will avoid participation in the institutionalization of forms of multilateral cooperation within the framework of the CIS which might transform the CIS into a supranational structure of a federal or confederate charter" (Bukkvoll 1997, 64). To extricate itself from the awkward situation of the suspension of oil and gas deliveries, Kravchuk tried to reduce its dependence on Russia and signed agreements with Turkey, Iran, and Turkmenistan. In order to maintain its independent position, Ukraine only held an associate membership in the CIS Economic Union. It has refused to join any CIS agreement on military integration in the same fashion.

Further, to defend its culture and language from Russian influence, a policy of 'de-Russification' was implemented internally. A policy of weakening its ties with Russia and strengthening ties with Europe was perceived as a signal in the right direction. The nationalists also uphold that integration with Europe will enrich Ukraine's culture and facilitate the rebirth of ethnic Ukrainian culture.

Russia's View of the Relationship

For Russians, the Kievan-Rus state formation (900- 1240) is a common heritage for both Russia and Ukrainians. Kiev, the capital of Ukraine, was the genesis of the Russian nation. The Russians accepted Christianity over a thousand years ago (Simes 1992), and Russians considered Kiev the mother of all Russian cities. However, the two countries were divided for 414 years (1240-1654). Ukraine became a part of Russia after signing the Treaty of Pereyaslav in 1654.

The Russian nationalists saw Pereyaslav as the culmination of a popular Ukrainian desire to reunite with Russia forever (Morrison 1993). Thus, the awakening of Ukraine and especially the separatist character of Ukrainian-ness surprised the Russian intelligentsia. In the words of Georgiy Fedotov:

we are never able to understand such type of Ukrainian behavior; this was first of all because we loved Ukraine, we loved its land, the people, its songs, and we thought that all this was also part of our national heritage. Also, the separatism was incomprehensible to us because we had never really been interested in the three to four centuries of history that had formed the Ukrainian people and their culture different from Great Russians (Bukkvoll 1997, 61).

So also, Ukraine as a separate territorial entity was unimaginable for the Russians in general and Russian nationalists in particular. In the words of Ivan Dzyuba (the Ukrainian writer), who perceptibly noted: that those who loved Ukraine most of all were the Russian nationalists such as the XIX century Slavophile Ivan Aksakov:

The Little Russian question does not exist because this is an all-Russian territorial question for the people, for the entire Russian land, concerning equally closely the inhabitant of Penza and Volhynia. Trans-Dnieper Ukraine and Byelorussia are not a conquered land that can be argued about but a part of the living body of Russia: questions and arguments have no place here (Morrison 1993, 681).

Thus Russians, who can accept the independence of Poland, Latvia, or Georgia, feel their identity threatened by the idea of Ukrainian statehood, nationality, and even linguistic autonomy (Morrison 1993). Therefore, Ukrainian independence was harder for many Russians to accept for historical, cultural, and territorial reasons. These days Ukrainians and Russians argue whether the treaty of Pereyaslav should be interpreted as only a temporary military agreement or as the natural reunification of the Ukrainian and Russian peoples.

UKRAINE-RUSSIAN RELATIONS: CONTENTIOUS ISSUES

As discussed above, Ukraine's relations with Russia in the first four years of its independent existence were fully guided by the fear factor. The unresolved contentious issues related to borders, territorial integrity, and nuclear assets further contributed to this. However, staying completely isolated from Russia was unrealistic given Ukraine's vast network of economic, political, and military links with Russia. However, the failure to sign a friendship and cooperation pact, which might have solved many bilateral difficulties, would not come to

fruition. Talks between the two sides occasionally failed and broke off owing to disagreements on various subjects. Ukraine's increasing inability to pay its energy debt also brought about tensions in the bilateral relations as Kiev became extremely troubled when Moscow leveled its gas prices with world gas prices. Apart from these issues, contradictions in their approach to various problems oscillated Ukraine Russian relations for a long time. However, both parties show interest in normalizing the relationship due to their interdependence. With the coming to power of Leonid Kuchma as President, Ukraine's Russian relations moved onto a realistic plane (Motyl 2014). As Kuchma's policies reflect his understanding of domestic dynamics and balances, he has been able to reflect his domestic successes in relations with Moscow. Ukraine's pursuit of Russian economic resources showed bright prospects and new avenues to strengthen bilateral relations. Kuchma also showed his willingness to move towards more integration with Russia and CIS. However, he strongly underlined his opposition to political and military integration, keeping Ukraine's territorial integrity. Thus, Ukraine-Russian relations again continue to evolve around the existence of contentious issues, contradictions, and interdependence. These are now discussed below.

Contentious Issues: Recognition of Ukrainian Borders

The issues of Russia and Ukraine's land and sea frontiers have remained unresolved since independence (Karácsonyi *et al.* 2015). In Kiev's opinion, all of its borders must be established following the principles of international law, which it asserts would give all borders the 'same legal status'. Moscow, in contrast, has not been willing to sign a basic treaty with Ukraine in which Russia renounces all territorial claims and the revision of frontiers. However, instead, the Russo-Ukrainian treaty of 1990 has been declared by the Russian side (unofficial so far) to be obsolete since it had been signed under completely different conditions, i.e., when the Soviet Union still existed. In the security guarantees which President of Russia Yeltsin gave to President Kravchuk during the summit in January 1993, Russia expressed its willingness to respect the frontiers of Ukraine only within the CIS frame. In other words, if Ukraine were to withdraw from the CIS someday, it would have to expect Russian territorial claims (Alexandrova 1994). Although Yeltsin reiterated the Russian willingness to guarantee the security of Ukraine during the meeting between Yeltsin and Kravchuk in June 1993, the problem continued to remain a pressing issue until the signing of the Friendship Cooperation Treaty in May 1997 (Schadlow 1992).

In terms of border recognition, the treaty was viewed as a great accomplishment for Ukrainians since article 2 of the treaty was an explicit pledge on the side of both parties to 'respect each other's territorial integrity and confirm the inviolability of the boundaries that exist between them'. Despite the apparent accomplishment, Ukrainian scholars remained skeptical of Russia's willingness to protect Ukraine's territorial integrity for various reasons, including the distinction between land and maritime border difficulties. As far as the 2063-kilometer-long land border between Ukraine and Russia was concerned, many objections were raised. Although some preliminary discussions have taken place, the actual delimitation of land borders has not occurred. The Russians rebuffed the proposals to resolve the issues on eight to ten occasions (Wolczuk 2003). Inevitably, as the issue of demarcation and delimitation was tied to the Black

Sea Fleet (BSF) status, the problems continued to exist until the BSF issue had been dealt with. As far as marine borders are concerned, an equally intractable problem has been the demarcation of the Sea of Azov and the Strait of Kerch. Ukraine insists on treating the former as a territorial sea and negotiating its delimitation separately from the issue of - the Strait of Kerch. However, the Russians rejected any moves that would remove the sea's internal status and maintained that both should be recognized as internal water of the two states (Smolansky 2004). Because Moscow believed that such a move would remove barriers to its exploitation by foreign forces (Sherr 1997). So, although negotiations were stepped up in 2002, the deadlock persists.

Contentious Issues: Status of Crimea, Sevastopol, and the Black Sea Fleet

The extremely complicated nature of the problem regarding Crimea in general, Sevastopol, and the main naval base of the Black Sea Fleet, in particular, have historical, ethnic, military-strategic, and economic importance for both countries. As Russian territorial claims and Ukrainian territorial integrity are involved therein, the Crimean question was highly volatile between the two countries right from their independence in 1991. From the late eighteenth century until 1954, Crimea was an integral part of Russia. Technically, however, it was indisputably Ukrainian territory, at least since 1954, when it was 'donated' to Ukraine by Khrushchev to mark the anniversary of Pereyaslav (Morrison 1993). This decision was also effectively validated in the referendum on independence in 1991 when Crimea voted for the independence of Ukraine. However, in the Russian parliament, both nationalists and neo-communists question its transfer to Ukraine. As most of the Russian Black Sea Fleet naval bases are located on the Crimean territory, the biggest one in Sevastopol - a city emotionally loaded for the Russians, with a history of military endeavor and sacrifice, Russians want Crimea in Toto and Sevastopol in particular along with the Black Sea Fleet based there. Thus, despite Ukraine's formal ownership of Crimea, the Russian parliament has waged a campaign to regain Crimea by disputing the validity of Ukraine's possession of the peninsula from the early days of Ukrainian independence.

In May 1992, the Russian Supreme Soviet published a resolution disputing the Soviet authorities' 1954 decision to alter Crimea's status from Russian to a Ukrainian autonomous republic. This was followed on 5 December 1992 by the adoption of the Congress of the People's Deputies of the Russian Federation, of a decision to authorize an examination of the issue of the status of Sevastopol by the Russian Supreme Soviet (Wolczuk 2003). As far as the Black Sea Fleet issue is concerned, the tussle is over flags, oaths, lines of command, and the basing rights that came with the fleet.

The initial agreement on the BSF in January 1992, in the early aftermath of the Soviet Union's disintegration, for Ukraine to absorb 30% of the BSF was never implemented since no decision on basing and territory rights was made. However, the first serious attempt to reconcile the two parties was made at a meeting in Yalta in August 1992 to prevent further damage to the already strained relations. On 1 August, Russia and Ukraine signed an agreement "on the principles of the construction of a Ukrainian Navy and the Russian Black Sea Navy based on the old Soviet Union Black Sea Fleet" (Kryukov 2006, 213). The deal exempted the BSF from CIS jurisdiction, thereby bilateralizing a technical mutual concern. However, the matter remained

dormant until a further meeting between Yeltsin and Kravchuk in June 1993, which resulted in an agreement on a fifty-fifty division to begin in September 1993, allowing Russia to continue utilizing Sevastopol as a port after 1995 (Morrison 1993). Indeed, Russia's position was so strong that, following the Massandra summit in September 1993, Yeltsin triumphantly declared that Russia would take ownership of Ukraine's share of the BSF to decrease Ukraine's gas debt to Russia. Faced with a Russian threat to cut off all supplies, Kravchuk favored selling a portion of the BSF and leasing Sevastopol to Russia (Smith 1994).

Accused of high treason by Rukh leader Chornovil, Kravchuk said, "the threat of an energy cut-off had left him with no choice: We had to act based on realism. Suppose we had slammed the door and left. The gas would have been turned off, and there would have been nothing else left to do" (Morrison 1993, 695). Furthermore, as the country's economic situation worsened during 1994, Ukraine's negotiation stance deteriorated. As a result, its claim to 50% of the fleet was significantly watered down in the Sochi treaties agreed by the two presidents on 9 June 1995. The ensuing second Sochi agreement, signed on 25 November 1995, outlined the practicalities of fleet division, the first half of which proceeded very well. Despite Ukrainian concerns about Russian behavior, the prospects for development improved, as seen by the June 1996 adoption of the new Ukrainian constitution, which included provisions for the temporary stationing of foreign military forces on Ukrainian soil.

A joint commission was established in August 1996, but the issues of finalizing contractual arrangements on the status and conditions for launching the BSF on Ukrainian territory; parameters governing the division of the fleet and its infrastructure; the allocation of Sevastopol's bays; and the term of the lease and the system of lease payments remained unresolved. On the other hand, on 28 May 1997, Ukraine and Russia announced the signing of an inter-governmental agreement settling the BSF's division, base, and cost. Three days later, on 31 May, the long-awaited inter-state treaty of friendship, cooperation, and partnership was signed (Wolczuk 2003).

On the one hand, the signing of the agreements and Russia's concessions on joint basing rights are undoubtedly significant achievements for Kiev, especially given Russia's fears that Ukraine's Crimean bases could eventually be leased out to NATO forces. However, on the other hand, the legitimization of the involvement of Russian forces on Ukrainian territory over the next twenty to twenty-five years, as well as the actual subdivision of the fleet and, most importantly, its infrastructure, are significant achievements for Kiev (Sherr 1998). Nonetheless, with the approval of the pact by the Russians and Ukrainians on 24 March 1999, the total transfer of forces from Soviet to Ukrainian control proved to be less difficult than could have been predicted. Though there were issues with nuclear forces and the BSF, the exchange of unconditional acknowledgment of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity has opened up new pathways in the Ukraine-Russia relationship.

In terms of the Black Sea Fleet's status, another agreement was made in January 2001, establishing a Ukraine-Russian command post in Sevastopol for cooperative patrol operations. Despite reciprocal promises to work toward the settlement of these fleet-related challenges, no progress has been made. In June 2002, Serhiy Pirozhkov, deputy secretary of Ukraine's National Security and Defense Council, observed that Ukraine had decided to seek NATO membership. It could not permit the deployment of foreign military forces on its territory. Nevertheless, after

the Russian press reminded Kiev that the Fleet agreement was tied to the gas debt owed to Russia, the Ukrainian foreign ministry announced that Ukraine would meet all its promises regarding Russia's Black Sea Fleet (Smolansky 2004). However, the problem was played down in July 2003, when the US Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Europe and Eurasia Steven Pifer announced that Washington did not regard Ukraine's housing of the Russian Black Sea Fleet as an impediment to integration with NATO (Smolansky 2004).

Contentious Issues: Energy Supplies for Ukraine

As Ukraine continues to rely largely on Russia as a source of imports and a destination for its exports, contemporary Russia sees an opportunity to enhance its power and natural resources output to place political pressure on Ukraine. Due to its far larger economy than Ukraine's, Moscow has employed many methods to prevent Ukraine from reorienting itself toward its "natural" trading partners in the West. For example, Russia has attempted to use Ukraine's debt to keep the country from drifting westward. As Ukraine's debt to Russia has risen, Moscow has attempted to turn it into assets by seeking control of 'strategic' portions of Ukraine's infrastructure, such as ownership of gas pipelines and oil refineries (Wolczuk 2003). In addition, Moscow has worked hard to undermine Ukraine's efforts to attain economic independence. Because of the industrial cycle structure between Ukraine and Russia, Ukraine is particularly sensitive to this. This gives it subsidiary interests in developing a natural program of energy consumption reduction in the production and social spheres, searching for deposits of energy and natural resources on its territory, attracting foreign investment to extract these deposits, developing new mining and coal consumption technologies, and so on.

Contentious Issues: NATO Expansion

Although Russia has reluctantly accepted an initial expansion of NATO to the East, it objects to the general principle of NATO expansion, as it regards this organization as a potential enemy. Indeed, most political forces in Russia and its citizens view the partnership with NATO as relative and not as the foundation to guarantee the country's national security in the military sphere (Bassey 2022). Moscow's motives in opposing NATO enlargement are also based on its geographical interests rather than on any perception of a growing military threat. Therefore, Russia's most important demand of NATO is that Ukraine and the Baltic States be recognized as a zone of Russia's vital interests (Tolstov 1997). Nevertheless, to remain away from the Russian sphere of influence, Ukraine viewed strengthening its partnership relations with NATO and with individual members of this organization to provide external assurance of national sovereignty.

CONCLUSION

From the above, it is clear that Ukrainian dealings with Russian challenges became difficult because of the country's history, its domestic realities, and its proximity to Russia. As the recent history of Ukrainian-Russian interaction suggests, the interdependence and similarity of the two Slavic countries make military confrontation, especially war, between them attainable.

Over the past years, the geopolitical perspective revealed the difficulties of Ukraine's adherence to either a Eurasian or European identity. Geographically, as Ukraine is located in Central-East Europe, bordered by Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, and Moldova to the West, and by Belarus to the North-East, and with its location at the crossroads of Europe and Asia, its geopolitical uniqueness is described variously by different writers as the Moscow bridge to the West, a buffer against invasion from the West, Europe's linchpin, and a strategic pivot in Europe. Thus, accepting Eurasian or European identity sets the dilemma for defining the foreign policy course. The economic perspectives, security aspects, and ethnocultural factors further contribute to this dilemma. The century-old economic dependence of Ukraine upon Russia, inhabited by many ethnic Russians and Russified Ukrainians, forced policymakers to keep all ties with Russia. On the other hand, the security aspect compelled them to develop close cooperation with the West to remain away from any possible imperialistic design of Russia to save their newly born independence.

Thus, the worst scenarios in developing Russian-Ukrainian relations have taken place because of contentious issues and contradictions. First, there has been civil disorder and insurgency in eastern Ukraine, inspired or supported by Russia. There has also been an attempt at a full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022. Despite the aggressive rhetoric and tensions between the two countries since 1999, their unresolved differences have become fatally deadlocked.

COMPLIANCE WITH ETHICAL STANDARDS

Acknowledgments:

Not applicable.

Funding:

Not applicable.

Statement of human rights:

This article does not contain any studies with human participants performed by any authors.

Statement on the welfare of animals:

This article does not contain any studies with animals performed by any authors.

Informed consent:

Not applicable.

REFERENCES

1. Alexandrova, Olga. "Russia as a Factor in Ukrainian Security Concepts." *AUSSEN POLITIK*, 45(1): 68-78.
2. Bassey, Samuel. 2022. "Ukraine's Policy' of Euro-Atlantic integration and European security: Failure and Successes". *GNOSI: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Human Theory and Praxis*, 5(1).
3. Bukkvoll, Tor. 1997. "Ukraine and European security". London: A&C Black.
4. Bureiko, Nadiia, and Teodor Lucian Moga. 2019. "The Ukrainian–Russian linguistic dyad and its impact on national identity in Ukraine". *Europe-Asia Studies*, 71(1): 137-155.
5. Chumachenko, Volodymyr. 2008. "Literary dimensions of national identity: The historical novel of the late Soviet period (1960s–1980s)". Illinois: The University of Illinois Press.
6. Crescenzi, Riccardo, and Alexander Jaax. 2017. "Innovation in Russia: the territorial dimension." *Economic geography* 93(1): 66-88.
7. D'Anieri, Paul. 2019. *Ukraine and Russia: From Civilised Divorce to Uncivil War*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
8. Elena, Lukyanova. 2015. "On the rule of law in the context of Russian foreign policy". *Russian Law Journal*, 3(2):10-36.
9. Felgenhauer, Tyler. 1999. "Ukraine, Russia, and the Black Sea Fleet Accords". New Jersey: Princeton Univ. Press.
10. Gardner, Hall. 2015. "The genesis of the Russia-Ukraine conflict". New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
11. Glaser, Amelia. 2017. "Jewish Alienation through a Ukrainian Looking Glass: Dovid Hofsteyn's Translations of Taras Shevchenko". *Prooftexts*, 36(1-2): 83-110.
12. Grant, Thomas. 2015. "Annexation of Crimea". *American journal of international law*, 109(1): 68-95.
13. Hillis, Faith. 2013. "Children of Rus': Right-bank Ukraine and the invention of a Russian nation". New York: Cornell University Press.
14. Hosking, Geoffrey. 2012. "Russian history: A very short introduction". Oxford: Oxford University Press.
15. Karácsonyi, Dávid, Károly Kocsis, Katalin Kovály, József Molnár, and László Póti. "East-West dichotomy and political conflict in Ukraine-Was Huntington right?." *Hungarian Geographical Bulletin*, 63(2): 99-103.
16. Kryukov, Alexandrovich. 2006. "Evolution of Russian-Ukrainian relations: the legal status of the Black Sea Fleet." *Military Thought* 15(2): 120-133.
17. Lowish, Thomas. 2021. "Catherine the Great and the Development of a Modern Russian Sovereignty, 1762-1796". Berkeley: University of California.
18. Miller, Eric A., and Arkady Toritsyn. 2005. "Bringing the leader back in: Internal threats and alignment theory in the Commonwealth of Independent States". *Security Studies*, 14(2): 325-363.
19. Morrison, John. 1993. "Pereyaslav and after: the Russian—Ukrainian relationship". *International Affairs*, 69(4): 677-703.

20. Motyl, Alexander. 2014. "The surrealism of realism: Misreading the war in Ukraine". *World Affs.*, 177: 75-83.
21. Plokhyy, Serhii. 2017. "Lost kingdom: a history of Russian Nationalism from Ivan the Great to Vladimir Putin". London: Penguin Random House.
22. Potichnyj, Peter 1991. "The referendum and presidential elections in Ukraine". *Canadian Slavonic Papers*, 33(2):123-138.
23. Rothschild, Joseph. 2017. "East-Central Europe between the two world wars". Washington DC: University of Washington Press.
24. Rozanov, Anatoliy. and Elena, Dovgan. 2010. "Collective Security Treaty Organisation". Geneva: The Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces.
25. Schadow, Nadia. 1996. "The Denuclearization of Ukraine: Consolidating Ukrainian Security". *Harvard Ukrainian Studies*, 20: 271-287.
26. Sherr, J. 1998. *Ukrainian Security Policy: The Relationship between Domestic and External Factors*. New York: M.E. Sharpe.
27. Shkandrij, Myroslav. 2001. "Russia and Ukraine: Literature and the Discourse of empire from Napoleonic to Postcolonial Times". Quebec: McGill-Queen's Press.
28. Shulman, Stephen. 1998. "Cultures in competition: Ukrainian foreign policy and the 'cultural threat from abroad". *Europe-Asia Studies*, 50(2):287-303.
29. Simes, Dimitri. 1992. "America and the post-Soviet republics". *Foreign Affairs*, 71(3): 73-89.
30. Skirda, Alexandre. 2004. "Nestor Makhno--anarchy's Cossack: The Struggle for Free Soviets in the Ukraine 1917-1921". Chico: AK Press.
31. Smith, M., 1994. "Russian Hegemony on the Near Abroad". Sandhurst: Conflict Studies Research Center.
32. Smolansky, Oles. 2004. "Ukraine and Russia: An Evolving Marriage of Inconvenience". *Orbis*, 48 (1): 117-34.
33. Sullivant, Robert. 1962. "The Bolshevik Approach to Nationalism and Ukraine." New York: Columbia University Press.
34. Szporluk, Roman. 2020. "Russia, Ukraine, and the breakup of the Soviet Union". Washington: Hoover Press.
35. Szporluk, Roman. 1997. "Ukraine: From an imperial periphery to a sovereign state". *Daedalus*, 126(3): 85-119.
36. Trenin, Dmitri. 2011. "Post-imperium: a Eurasian story". Washington: Brookings Institution Press.
37. Wolczuk, Kataryna. 1996. "Constituting Statehood: The New Ukrainian Constitution". *The Ukrainian Review*, 45(1):17-38.